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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in www.magzter.com 29 OCTOBER 2024 | TUESDAY | BENGALURU | 25 RABI UL SANI, 1446 AH Vol 4 | Issue No 274| Pages: 8

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Karnataka gives nod to internal reservation among SCs

BENGALURU, 28 OCT

Karnataka Cabinet on Monday gave its consent for providing internal reservation among Scheduled Castes (SC) and decided to constitute a commission that will be tasked with collecting empirical data.

The commission will be constituted under a retired High Court judge, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil told reporters after the Cabinet meeting.

"The government will ask the committee to submit the report in three months," he said.

Patil said the Cabinet also decided to postpone all upcoming recruitments for at least three months until the commission submits its report.

Just ahead of the Assembly polls, the previous BJP government's Cabinet had taken a decision on internal reservation, by recommending to the central government a six per cent internal quota for SC (Left), 5.5 per cent for SC (Right), 4.5 per cent for Banjara, Bhovi, Korcha, Kuruma etc and one per cent for others.

HK Patil PHOTO: FB

Supreme Court on 1 August held that states are constitutionally empowered to make sub-classifications within the Scheduled Castes, which form a socially heterogeneous class, for granting reservation for the uplift of castes that are socially and educationally more backward.

- The Cabinet also sanctioned the construction of a Military Central Command Centre at a cost of Rs 102.80 crore. The centre will span 3.16 acres.

Patil stated that the Cabinet discussed 33 issues, leading to several decisions, including the establishment of special police stations to address caste atrocity cases and the creation of an Agriculture Development Agency.

The Cabinet also sanctioned the construction of a Military Central Command Centre at a cost of Rs 102.80 crore. The centre, which will span 3.16 acres, is to be built within the IG office premises.

Minister for Public Works Development (PWD), HC Mahadevappa, said that the cabinet has approved the establishment of 33 special police stations and the recruitment of 450 personnel to handle emergency cases related to caste atrocities.

The Cabinet decided to designate 33 units of the Civil Rights Enforcement Directorate within the Social Welfare Department as special police stations and approved the recruitment of 450 personnel needed to manage these units. —*Agencies*

After 14 yrs, India to hold census in 2025

Sources say govt undecided on caste census

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

The much-delayed decadal census exercise and the work to update the National Population Register (NPR) are likely to begin early 2025 and the data will be declared by 2026, thus changing future census cycles completely, official sources said.

However, no decision has been taken yet on whether caste census will also be carried out along with the general census.

The country's population count has been conducted every 10 years since 1951, but the census work in 2021 could not be carried out due to the Covid-19 pandemic. So far, no formal announcement has been made on its next schedule.

"The census cycle will be 2025-2035 and then 2035-2045," sources said.

The Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner had prepared 31 questions to be asked to the citizens during the census exercise.

These questions include whether the head of the household belongs to Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe and other family members as asked in the previous census.

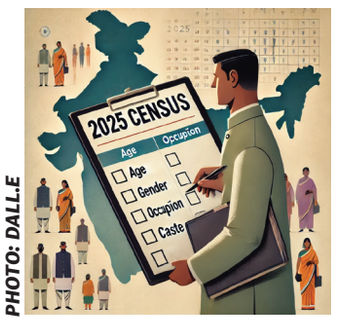


PHOTO: DALL.E

Opposition Congress and the RJD are among the political parties which have been demanding a caste census so that the total OBC population in the country is known.

"The government has not yet taken any decision on caste census," a source said.

It is to be seen whether the government will go ahead with the delimitation exercise, which is due in 2026.

Several political leaders from Southern states have expressed their apprehensions over the possibility of their states losing out on Lok Sabha seats and thereby their political clout as they have been successful in population control, unlike the Northern states.

They feel that the southern states may get less number of Parliamentary seats than the existing number of constituencies if the delimitation is carried out with the new data.

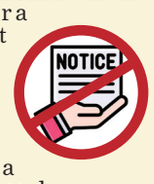
On the other hand, the Article 82 of the Constitution states: "Provided also that until the relevant figures for the first census taken after the year 2026 have been published, it shall not be necessary to readjust the allocation of seats in the House of the People to the States as readjusted on the basis of the 1971 census".

It means if census is conducted in 2025 and data published in 2026, delimitation exercise cannot be carried out based on 2025 census data. If it happens, then the Article 82 has to be amended. —*PTI*

WAQF NOTICES TO FARMERS TO BE WITHDRAWN

BENGALURU, 28 OCT

Following allegations by a section of farmers from Vijayapura district that their lands were marked as Waqf properties, Karnataka Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil on Monday said the notices issued to them will be withdrawn.



He said the Deputy Commissioner is inquiring into the "mistake."

He said the government has no intention to convert farmers' land into Waqf property and in case of any mistake, it will be rectified, and action taken against those responsible. "Taking note of the mistake that has happened, the notices that were issued will be withdrawn. It needs to be inquired into as to why the mistake happened and then it will be decided (on action against those responsible)," Patil said. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

SPAIN PM IN INDIA

India gets its 1st pvt military plane plant

VADODARA, 28 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Spanish counterpart Pedro Sanchez on Monday inaugurated the Tata Advanced System Limited-Airbus facility to manufacture C-295 military aircraft in India.

The facility in Gujarat's Vadodara is the first private sector final assembly line for military aircraft in India.

Nearly 18,000 different parts of this aircraft will be manufactured across the country by micro and small industries, Modi added.

Various airline firms have placed an order for the purchase of 1,200 new aircraft from around the world over.

Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran promised Modi that the first indigenously manufactured aircraft will be rolled out in two years.

In September 2021, India sealed a nearly Rs 21,000 crore deal with the Airbus Defence and Space to procure 56 C-295 transport aircraft to replace the ageing Avro-748 planes of the Indian Air Force. Under the agreement, Airbus will deliver the first 16 aircraft in 'fly-away' condition from its final assembly line in Seville, Spain, within four years. The subsequent 40 aircraft will be manufactured and assembled by the Tata Advanced Systems in India as part of an industrial partnership between the two companies.

PM Narendra Modi and Spanish PM Pedro Sanchez during a roadshow in Vadodara PHOTO: PTI

Congress took a jibe at Modi and the Eknath Shinde-led Mahayuti government, accusing them of a 'wholesale surrender' of Maharashtra's interests by allegedly directing the Tata-Airbus C-295 aircraft facility to Gujarat's Vadodara. —*PTI*

Over 60 flights get bomb threats on Monday

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

More than 60 flights of Indian carriers received bomb threats on Monday, sources said. In 15 days, over 410 domestic and international flights operated by the Indian carriers have received hoax bomb threats. Most of the threats were issued through social media. The sources in the know said around 21 flights each of Air India and IndiGo, and about 20 flights of Vistara received the threats on Monday. An Air India spokesperson said a number of its flights were subject to security threats received on social media on Monday. The IT Ministry has asked social media platforms to observe due diligence obligations. —*PTI*

ED conducts fresh searches in MUDA case

BENGALURU, 28 OCT

Enforcement Directorate undertook fresh searches on Monday in the money laundering case involving the Mysuru Urban Development Authority in, which it has booked Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, his family and others, official sources said. About seven to eight premises in Bengaluru and Mysuru are being covered in the search, the sources said. This includes the premises of a builder in Bengaluru and some linked persons. The federal agency conducted the first round of raids in this case on 18 October when it searched the MUDA office in Mysuru and some other locations. —*PTI*

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Ranjith booked for sexually assaulting man in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, 28 OCT

A case has been registered against Malayalam film director Ranjith Balakrishnan on a complaint by a 31-year-old man, who alleged that he was sexually assaulted by him at a five-star hotel here, police said on Monday. In the FIR, the complainant has claimed that he met the director in 2012 in Kozhikode when he had gone to meet actor Mammootty during the shoot of 'Bavuttiyude Namathil', a film written and produced by Balakrishnan. The complainant alleged that the director invited him to the hotel near Kempegowda International Airport in December 2012 where he allegedly offered him alcohol and sexually assaulted him. —*PTI*

CHIKKARA CLINCHES GOLD

An 18-year-old Chirag Chikkara secured a Gold medal in the men's freestyle 57kg category on the final day of the U23 World Wrestling Championships in Tirana, Albania, on Monday. He is the only third Indian to become Under-23 world champion PHOTO: UNITED WORLD WRESTLING >>>More on Page 8

J&K: Terrorists fire at ambulance in army convoy; 1 ultra killed

JAMMU, 28 OCT

Terrorists opened fire at an Army convoy on Monday, targeting an ambulance, in the Akhnoor sector of Jammu, following which special forces and NSG commandos launched an operation killing one of the attackers, officials said.

In a first, the Army also pressed its four BMP-II infantry combat vehicles for surveillance and strengthening the cordon around the attack site near the Assan temple in Jogwan village along the Line of Control (LoC) in Bhattal of Khour, the officials said.

Boyevaya Mashina Pekhoty or BMP-II is a 1980-era Soviet Union Infantry Combat Vehicle, which has 30mm fully stabilised automatic cannon, 7.62 mm Machine Gun and 4 kms range anti-tank wire-guided 'Konkurs' Missile. It can carry seven troopers and three crew members.

It is also equipped with the Night Vision Device and Smoke Grenade Launchers system and has a maximum speed of 45km per hour.

Helicopters were also pressed into action to locate the hiding terrorists in the jungles of the area. The officials said the terrorists, believed to be three in number who infiltrated into India from across the border the night before, opened fire on the Army convoy around 6:30 am, targeting an ambulance. Both of its occupants, including the driver, were unharmed.

As the troops retaliated, the attackers fled towards the forest area nearby and were later located inside a basement, the officials said, adding there was an exchange of fire until 11 am when the guns fell silent.

The situation intensified around 2.45 pm again, leading to explosive sounds and heavy gunfire as the Army's special forces and National Security Guards (NSG) commandos engaged the terrorists. —*PTI*

Prohibitory orders imposed in Hyderabad till 28 Nov

HYDERABAD, 28 OCT

The Hyderabad Police issued prohibitory orders on procession, dharnas and public meetings till 28 November in the city.

Hyderabad Police Commissioner CV Anand, who issued the orders, said reliable information has been placed before him that several organisations/parties are trying to create disturbances affecting public peace and order in Hyderabad city, by resorting to dharnas and protests.

According to a notification issued by Anand, to maintain public order, peace and tranquillity in Hyderabad, gathering of five or more people, processions, dharnas, rallies or public meetings are not allowed.

Individual/groups of individuals are prohibited from making any speeches, gestures or displaying pictures, any symbols, placards, flags and any type of messages of electronic form etc, which is likely to cause disturbance to public peace and order in the limits of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, it said.

PHOTO: PTI

However, peaceful dharnas and protests are allowed only at Indira Park Dharna Chowk, and any dharna or protest anywhere else in Hyderabad and Secunderabad is not permitted.

The order will remain in force from 6pm on 27 October to 6pm on 28 November, it said. —*PTI*

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS SURGE TO NEW RECORD

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

Greenhouse gas levels surged to a new record in 2023, rising by more than 10 per cent in just two decades, according to a new report by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

The globally averaged surface concentration of carbon dioxide reached 420 parts per million (ppm), methane 1934 parts per billion and nitrous oxide 336.9 parts per billion (ppb) in 2023. These values are 151 per cent, 265 per cent and 125 per cent of pre-industrial (before 1750) levels, it said. "We are clearly off track to meet the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius and aiming for 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels," said WMO. —*PTI*

'DON'T INSULT COWS'

R'than cows not stray but 'destitute'

JAIPUR, 28 OCT

Rajasthan government on Monday issued an order banning use of the term 'awara' that means stray for cows and other animals in the state, calling it an insult and inappropriate. The order asked to use words such as 'helpless' or 'destitute that are roaming on roads on any other of their own.

Animal Husbandry Minister Joraram Kumawat in July raised the issue first time in the Assembly.

He had also claimed that the BJP government was working for the protection & promotion of cows and bulls and had provided with Rs 250 crore welfare fund.

Talking to reporters on Monday, Kumawat said that the government was running many schemes for cow promotion with sensitivity.

The order asked people to use words such as 'helpless' or 'destitute' while referring to stray cows PHOTO: X

"Nine-month grant is being given for cows in Gaushalas. A 12-month grant is being given in Nandi Shalas. A yearly grant is also being given to sick and disabled animals," he added.

"There is a plan to open animal shelters at every Panchayat level. In this, 10 per cent amount will have to be given to the organisation, while 90 per cent amount will be given by the government. There is a provision of giving Rs 1.56 crore for Nandi Shala," he said. —*Agencies*

314 cases filed against drunken driving in City

BENGALURU, 28 OCT

The Bengaluru traffic police booked 314 cases against drivers found driving under the influence of alcohol during a special drive conducted across the City, police said on Monday. The drive was conducted from October 21 to October 27 during which 25,383 vehicles were checked, they said. "The special drive was aimed to curb the menace of drunken driving and ensure road safety in Bengaluru city. The Traffic Police Department will continue to conduct such drives to enforce traffic rules and regulations. A total of 314 cases were registered against those vehicle users who were found driving or riding under the influence of alcohol," Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) for Bengaluru City, MN Anucheth, said. *—PTI*

B'deshi nat'l held for staying illegally in City for 7 yrs

BENGALURU, 28 OCT

Kadugodi police arrested a Bangladeshi national who was allegedly staying in the City illegally for the last seven years. According to the investigation, the accused, Mohammad Ramzan, had allegedly entered the City leaving his wife behind seven years ago and started working as a labourer at a local metal scrap unit here. Ramzan had created fake documents showing him as a native of West Bengal. He was staying in a rented room in Channasandra, Kadugodi. An official from Kadugodi police station informed Salar News, "After the accused left Bangladesh, his wife filed a missing report with the police there. The information was sent to the Foreigners Regional Registration Office and the Information Services Division in Karnataka. The Bengaluru police were directed to launch a search for the missing person who was found to be illegally staying in Channasandra," the official said
—Salar News

BBMP to conduct survey through satellite imagery

BENGALURU, 28 OCT

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has decided to conduct satellite-based surveys to identify illegal constructions across the city. BBMP officials shared that the survey will be carried out in phases. The first phase will involve verifying sanctioned building plans and permits, while the second phase will include physical inspections, during which BBMP staff will collect photographs and videos. To support this, the Palike is considering the development of a mobile app. In the third phase, satellite imagery will be analyzed to identify any new buildings constructed on vacant land within the past year. If any unauthorized structures are detected, zonal commissioners will have the authority to take action, including seizing buildings if necessary. On Friday, BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath directed all zonal commissioners to begin the survey and remove encroachments from rajakaluves (storm-water drains) and lakes before 15 November. The city reportedly has over 1,600 encroachments yet to be addressed within BBMP limits.*—Salar News*

Man dies in road accident near KR Puram metro stn

BENGALURU, 28 OCT

A 26-year-old man died from severe injuries sustained after he lost control of his scooter and fell near KR Puram metro station here. The deceased, Karthik, a resident of Margondanahalli of KR Puram used to work for a sign board manufacturer in the City. The incident took place around 5.30pm. Locals rushed him to a nearby hospital where he succumbed to injuries on Sunday night.
—Salar News

Govt not converting farmers' land to Waqf

Minister says time is needed to withdraw notices

BENGALURU, 28 OCT

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil on Monday dismissed the allegations that the government was converting farmers' land to Waqf property.

Patil said a couple of days is required to initiate an action to withdraw the notices issued.

Terming the issue as sensitive, he said, "The government has no such intention. In case anyone has committed such a mistake, it will be rectified and those responsible will be punished. The land belongs to whoever it has to," he added.

Bengaluru South BJP MP Tejasvi Surya on Friday met farmers from Vijayapura who found that their properties were marked as Waqf assets, and lashed out at the Congress.

Seeking to clarify "confusion" over 1,200 acres in Honavada of Tikota taluk being marked as Waqf property, Industries Minister MB Patil, who is in charge of Vijayapura district, subsequently said it was due to an "error" in the gazette notification.

He said only 11 acres out of the 1,200 acres are Waqf properties. He also said that a task force headed by the Deputy Commissioner will be formed to resolve the issues

Noting that MB Patil's statement has put an end to the controversy, the Law Minister said, if BJP wants to continue it for political reasons, it is not right.

To a question on BJP demanding resignation of Waqf Minister BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan, he said, "why? if notices were issued wrongly there is Deputy Commissioner of the district to rectify it, there is government above it. For the mistake committed by Talati (village accountant) or Tahsildar, it is not right to ask for Zameer or anyone else's resignation." *—PTI*

Minister HK Patil says that in case anyone has committed a mistake in the issue, it will be rectified and those responsible will be punished ***PHOTO: ANI***

- He said only 11 acres out of the 1,200 acres are Waqf properties. He also said that a task force headed by the Deputy Commissioner will be formed to resolve the issues

TRANSACTIONS IN FOCUS

MUDA case gains pace: ED raids multiple places in State

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday conducted searches across more than a half-dozen locations in Mangaluru, Bengaluru, Mandya, and Mysuru as part of a money-laundering investigation involving the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), according to sources.

These recent searches target the premises of a prominent builder and other private individuals. The ED had previously raided MUDA and a local taluk office last week, seizing important files during a two-day operation on Friday and Saturday. Now, officials have intensified their investigation into builders and other officials allegedly involved in this scam.

The investigation focuses on large financial transactions associated with the disposal of 928 controversial sites under MUDA's "50:50 scheme." ED officials conducted raids at various locations in Bengaluru, including Dollars Colony, Sadashivanagar, and at the residence of builder N Manjunath in JP Nagar. The expanded crackdown comes shortly after the ED summoned six employees from MUDA for questioning at its Bengaluru zonal office in connection with the alleged scam.

The probe gained traction after footage surfaced showing a representative of Manjunath allegedly counting Rs 25 lakh in cash, which was later submitted to the ED by RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna. This lead investigators to raid the residences of associates of Manjunath and other builders in Mysuru.

A team of ED officials raided Manjunath's residence in Bengaluru, seizing his relatives' bank account and transaction details, as well as the mobile phone of his household staff.

Manjunath, who owns Karthik Developers and is the developer behind Karthik Layout, faces allegations of bribing MUDA officials for favorable treatment under the 50:50 scheme

Meanwhile, Snehayamayi lodged a fresh complaint with Lokayukta SP TJ Udesha, demanding the arrest of two former MUDA commissioners, GB Natesh and G Dinesh.
—Salar News with Agencies

BJP MLC demands CBI probe in MUDA

Former minister and BJP MLC H Vishwanath on Monday demanded a probe into the allegations of MUDA scam from central premier investigating agencies like CBI as people have lost confidence with the State Lokayukta investigation. Continuing his attack on Siddaramaiah, he described him as careless and irresponsible. Because of this attitude, he was entangled in the MUDA scam. He said CM has no gratitude as he and several others put up a lot of efforts bringing him to Congress. CM has forgotten all. *—Salar News*

Cong tackled illegal iron ore exports: HK Patil

BENGALURU, 28 OCT

Seeking to defend the ruling Congress following a Court sentencing a party MLA in a case relating to theft and export of seized iron ore, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil on Monday said it was his party that initiated the fight in the case against the "loot" and those involved.

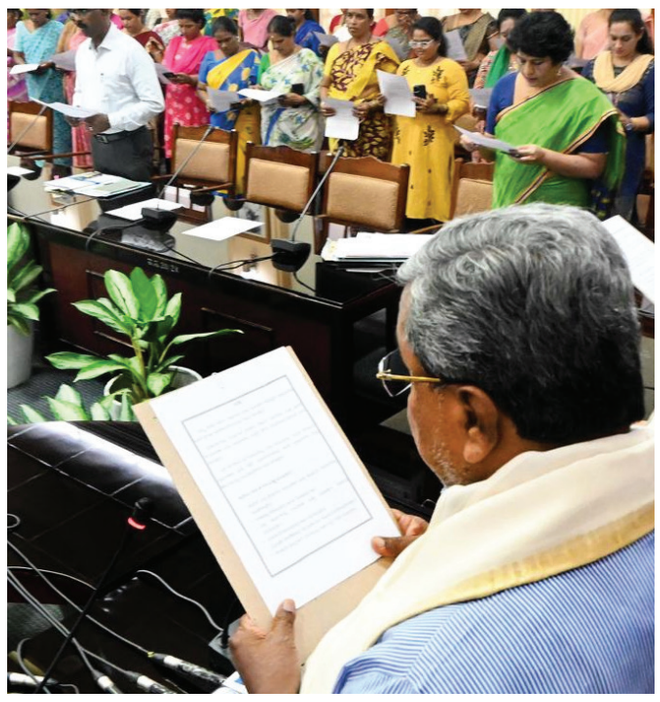
He also hit back at the Opposition BJP alleging that the theft of "lakhs of crores of rupees" worth state's mineral resources had happened during its tenure.

"During the BJP government, the country's biggest loot of lakhs of crore public and government assets had happened, regarding it, the Court a couple of days ago gave life sentences to few people, and a Rs 44 crore fine was imposed. The loot had happened during the BJP government to cover up that the party leaders are coming forward and making statements (targeting ruling Congress)," Patil said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said it cannot be said that there was no role of the then BJP government in the theft of lakhs of crore worth state's mineral resources that were seized and kept, because it was exported. The Minister also pointed out the Congress' padayatra (foot march) from Bengaluru to Ballari under Siddaramaiah's leadership in raising the issue at the time and showing "political will" in fighting against the "large scale loot." A court on Saturday sentenced Congress MLA Satish Sail and six others to seven years of rigorous imprisonment in each of the six cases related to the theft and export of seized iron ore, during 2009-2010, from the Belekeri port in Uttara Kannada district

It had also slapped a cumulative fine of Rs 44. 11 crore on all the seven accused. *—PTI*

VIGILANCE AWARENESS WEEK



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and others take oath during Vigilance Awareness Week event at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Monday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Bomb threats: Police file 10 cases, probe underway

BENGALURU, 28 OCT

The City police are facing a significant challenge in apprehending those responsible for the recent surge in hoax bomb threats made to the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru.

Between 22-26 October, police registered cases related to 10 hoax bomb threats, targeting various domestic and international airlines. A top official from the KIA police said that the cyber division is investigating this and looking into this matter. It is learnt that the investigation into these cases has been handed over to Assistant Commissioner of Police Naveen Kumar, Devanahalli sub-division.

Talking to **Salar News,** an official said that most hoax bomb threats and calls are made using virtual private networks. "The motives behind these threats could range from creating mass panic and disruption to testing authorities' responses. In some cases, it might be driven by a desire to cause chaos, impress friends, or even be linked to personal grievances against someone flying in or working with the targeted airline," the official said.

The government has told s X, Meta, Google and Twitter to share details about the user accounts that post these messages. "The government is planning to tweak the existing laws to deal with bomb hoaxes to airlines and ensure harsher punishments to deter such calls," the official added. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

Privacy case lead petitioner Puttaswamy dies

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

Former Karnataka High Court judge Justice KS Puttaswamy, who played a pivotal role in declaration of right to privacy as a fundamental right from the Supreme Court in 2017, passed away at his Bengaluru residence on Monday. He was 98. Justice Puttaswamy was the lead petitioner who had moved the apex court in 2012 challenging the constitutional validity of the Aadhaar scheme as being violative of the privacy right.

The Aadhaar scheme subsequently received legislative sanction. In a landmark verdict in August 2017, a nine-judge bench through an unanimous verdict declared the right to privacy a fundamental right under Article 21 (protection of life and personal liberty) of the Constitution.

It had underlined privacy to be "the constitutional core of human dignity". Born on 8 February, 1926, Puttaswamy studied at Maharaja's College, Mysuru and obtained a law degree from Government Law College, Bengaluru. He was enrolled as an advocate in January 1952 and became the Karnataka High Court judge on 28 November, 1977. *—PTI*

KS Puttaswamy ***PHOTO: PTI***

Woman who slipped into gorge rescued after 12 hours

TUMAKURU, 28 OCT

A young woman, who was trapped in a rocky terrain above a lake near Mandaragiri hills in the district while taking a selfie, survived miraculously on Monday, police said.

The police and firefighters brought her out safely after 12 hours of rescue operation.

Hamsa, 19, a B Tech student from Shivarampur village in Gubbi Taluk, had gone on Sunday with her friend from Bengaluru to see the Mandaragiri Hill falls, which has come alive due to torrential rains in the last few days, police said. Seeing her disappearing into the gorge, her friend raised an alarm and shouted for help, police said. Soon, villagers gathered there and called the police. *—PTI*

SWR implements crowd control measure amid festive rush

BENGALURU, 28 OCT

South Western Railway (SWR) has implemented measures to ensure smooth operations across the Hubballi, Mysuru, and Bengaluru divisions, in view of increased passenger traffic during the Deepavali festival, officials said on Monday.

A total of 55 trains are scheduled for the benefit of passengers during Deepavali and Chhath festive season, they said.

According to SWR officials, for regular trains extra coaches are also augmented based on the heavy waiting list trains to clear the rush.

Officers, Commercial staff and Scouts and Guides volunteers along with Security personnel are deployed during this rush hours to control the crowd at all major stations like, Hubballi, Dharwad, Belagavi, Vasco Da Gama, Gadag, Hosapete, Ballari, Vijayapura, Bagalkot, KSR Bengaluru, Yeswanthpur, Mysuru, Tumakuru, Bengaluru Cant., Mandya, Hassan, Davangere and other railway stations across SWR.

Temporary help desks have been set up to assist passengers with ticketing, directions, and schedule information at all major stations of SWR, it said.

Additional ticketing counters have been provided to clear the extra rush, queue managers are deputed at booking counters and at the general coach entrances to ensure that passengers obtain ticket and board the train in orderly manner, first aid box availability and ensure medical staff are on standby in case of health emergencies due to crowd pressure. *—PTI*

A total of 55 trains are scheduled for the benefit of passengers during Deepavali and Chhath festive season ***PHOTO: PTI***

POLICY CLEARED

State eyes ₹1.5Kcr investments in tourism

BENGALURU, 28 OCT

The Cabinet on Monday cleared the new tourism policy for the state, with the government eyeing investments to the tune of Rs 1,500 crore in the sector.

Karnataka plans to attract 20 lakh foreign tourists a year to be among the top five states in this category, and with respect to domestic footfalls it wants to be among the top three states with a target of 48 crore local tourists, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil told reporters after the Cabinet meeting.

Coastal Karnataka alone saw more than eight crore visitors in 2023, a notification issued by the Tourism department.

"A dedicated coastal tourism development board shall be set up to plan and steer activities in the regions. The board shall also ensure infrastructure development," Salma K Fahim, Secretary, Department of Tourism, said. Meanwhile, Patil further said the new tourism policy wants to promote tourism in the state under themes -- adventure, agriculture, caravan, coastal, beach, cuisine, cultural, traditional, environment, education, film, golf, sports, tribal, wedding destination, health tourism among others. Patil said the state government's intention is to see an increase in influx of both foreign and domestic visitors. With an idea of large scale developments, the department is planning to put Transferable Development Rights (TDR) mechanism in place at identified coastal zones. Apart from this, a few special integrated coastal tourism zones are in the talks that would facilitate investments and projects that would provide world class facilities for tourists. Shacks and Kiosks will also be erected at important zones with temporary facilities during the peak tourist seasons with seasonal employment opportunities, the department further said.*—Salar News with Agencies*

Coastal Karnataka alone saw more than eight crore visitors in 2023, according to a notification issued by the Tourism department ***PHOTO: PTI***

CAMPAIGN IN FULL SWING

Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy with scion of Mysuru royal family and BJP MP Yaduveer Krishnadatta Wadiyar campaign for JD(S) candidate for Channapatna bypoll Nikhil Kumaraswamy on Monday ***PHOTO: X/ @YADUVEERWADIYAR***

Bihar MP writes to Shah amid threats from Bishnoi gang

PATNA, 28 OCT

Maverick Bihar MP Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav has shot off a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking enhanced security in view of a "threatening call from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang". Purnea MP shared with the media his two-page letter to Shah, copies of which have been marked to the chief minister of Bihar and other top officials in the state. The letter, dated 21 October, was made public on Monday when a section of the media also played an audio clip of the call from a purported aide of Bishnoi "made from a Dubai number". Yadav also demanded "police escort" at all functions he attends across Bihar, warning "if I get murdered, the blame shall fall upon the Centre as well as the state government". Yadav, claimed that the caller was upset over his social media outbursts against Bishnoi, who is lodged in a Gujarat jail. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Delhi court defers Rashid's bail plea, MP returns to jail

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

A Delhi court deferred pronouncing its order on the bail plea of Baramulla MP Engineer Rashid in an alleged terror funding case, saying it has to be decided whether a special court should hear the matter as he is a lawmaker. Earlier in the day, the Baramulla MP surrendered before the Tihar Jail authorities after the end of his interim bail, prison officials said. Additional Sessions Judge Chander Jit Singh, who had reserved the bail order in the case, underscored he would first consider the issue of jurisdiction and whether or not to transfer the case to a special court meant to try lawmakers, considering Rashid was now an MP. The judge would consider the issue of the jurisdiction on November 13 while the bail order has been posted on 19 November. The newly-elected MP has been lodged in Tihar jail since 2019. *—PTI*

2 BJD leaders detained over derogatory posts

JAJPUR, 28 OCT

Two Biju Janata Dal (BJD) youth leaders in Odisha's Jajpur district have been detained after they allegedly posted derogatory posts on social media about Dharmasala's independent legislator Himanshu Sekhar Sahoo, police said on Monday. Dharmasala police have detained BJD Youth leaders, Subrat Kumar Dhal and Manas Mohanty, they said. According to the complaint, filed by Biswajit Swain, a BJP activist of Deulipal village with Dharmasala police station, Subrat Kumar Dhal and Manas Mohanty have been posting defamatory videos, articles, audio-visual items against Sahoo on social media platforms. Balbantray alleged that the police are taking a partisan attitude and harassing BJD. *—PTI*

'Amaravati to get projects worth ₹63,000 cr soon'

AMARAVATI, 28 OCT

Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh has said that the construction and developmental works by the government and private sectors in and around the capital Amaravati, worth USD 7.5 billion (Rs 63,000 crore) will start soon. Lokesh, who is currently touring the USA, has appealed to industrialists to invest in the state, which has a favourable environment in all aspects. "I explained that various construction and development works will be started in the vicinity of the capital Amaravati with USD 3 billion in the government sector and USD 4.5 billion dollars in the private sector," he added. *—PTI*

AFTER RAIDS, KTR CRIES CONSPIRACY

KTR's brother-in-law moves HC over 'rave'

HYDERABAD, 28 OCT

BRS working president KT Rama Rao hit out at the Telangana government, alleging that there has been a 'malicious campaign and political conspiracy' against the him and the party.

"The false cases are a result of pointing out Revanth's corruption, illegal activities, and failure. For the past eleven months, there has been a chaotic administration in the state," the statement added.

He further alleged that 'baseless news' has been spread on his name after Hyderabad Police raided the farmhouse of businessman Raj Pakala.

Notably, he also said that the case has been labelled a 'narcotics case' after getting orders "from above."

"After testing many at the party, Raj Pakala's test came back negative, yet BJP and Congress leaders are spreading baseless rumors about him. How can they still file an NDPS case? They dug a mountain, claiming there were bombs, but not even a mouse was found," the statement read.

Meanwhile, his brother-in-law, Raj Pakala, has moved Telangana High Court on Monday seeking protection against arrest after Mokila police issued notices to him. He claims the police intend to unlawfully implicate him in a criminal case. In his petition, he requests an order to prevent his arrest, citing unjustified police actions. *—PTI*

BRS working president KT Rama Rao PHOTO: PTI

SOLUTION AFTER YEARS

Disengagement between India, China continues

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

Disengagement between the Indian and Chinese Army is continuing in Depsang plains and Demchok in the Eastern Ladakh sector and is expected to be completed soon, defence sources said.

The Indian Army is looking to complete the process by 29 October in both the sectors after which they will start coordinated patrolling.

The Indian side has been working towards the resolving the long pending dispute and restore the situation pre April 2020 when the Chinese aggression had started in the area.

Positive development in India-China bilateral ties: Russian envoy

Russian envoy to India Denis Alipov on Monday termed the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of BRICS Summit in Kazan as a positive development in bilateral ties between India and China.

PHOTO: PTI

Following the talks, Modi had said in a post on X, "India-China relations are important for the people of our countries, and for regional and global peace and stability."

The envoy said it took place after nearly five years and it is a "positive development in India-China ties". *—PTI*

PM to launch AIIMS Bhopal & ₹12,850 cr projects today

BHOPAL, 28 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Tuesday virtually inaugurate the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Bhopal's new extension building and also launch its drone service facility, an official said on Monday.

AIIMS extension "Kautilya Bhavan" is a modern six-storey building covering an area of 11,900 square metres, with a project cost of Rs 64.44 crore.

During the inauguration, an advanced drone service will also be launched, enabling safe and efficient transport of essential medical supplies.

Meanwhile, Modi will launch development projects worth nearly Rs 12,850 crore and also extend his government's flagship health insurance scheme Ayushman Bharat to all senior citizens aged 70 years and above.

At a separate event, he will also distribute more than 51,000 appointment letters to the youth as part of his government's 'Rozgar Mela', an official statement said. *—PTI*

M'rashtra polls: In BJP's 3rd list, 2 Cong turncoats among 25 names

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde files his nomination from Kopri-Pachpakhadi constituency in Thane, on Monday PHOTO: PTI

MUMBAI, 28 OCT

BJP on Monday released its third list of 25 candidates for the Maharashtra assembly polls, giving tickets to two Congress turncoats and the personal assistant of Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

BJP, so far, has announced candidates for 146 seats. Polls to the 288-member Maharashtra assembly will take place on 20 November, while results will be declared on 23 November.

Jitesh Antapurkar, who won a bypoll in 2021 on a Congress ticket and is considered close to former chief minister Ashok Chavan, has been nominated from Deglur. Chavan had left the Congress recently and joined the BJP, which made him a Rajya Sabha MP.

Archana Patil-Chakurkar, daughter-in-law of Congress veteran and former Lok Sabha Speaker Shivraj Patil, has been fielded from Latur City seat. She had joined the BJP from the Congress in March this year.

BJP's third list features four women, including Lavekar and Archana Patil-Chakurkar.

Meanwhile, former Union minister and senior BJP leader Raosaheb Danve's daughter Sanjana Jadhav has joined the Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

With just two days left for the filing of nominations, former MP Rajendra Gavit and Vilas Tare also crossed over to Shiv Sena.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Monday warned Congress about fielding a candidate for the Solapur South assembly seat, for which his party has already announced a nominee. *—PTI*

Consensus in MVA over 95% seats: Sharad

A day before the deadline for filing of nominations, NCP (SP) head Sharad Pawar on Monday said the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) has reached a consensus over 90 to 95 per cent of the total 288 seats in the state. Speaking to reporters, Pawar, in a veiled attack on BJP, said their fight was against those who engineered splits in rival political parties and those who compromised with their ideology. Meanwhile, Congress on Monday claimed that the Tata-Airbus C-295 aircraft facility inaugurated in Vadodara was supposed to be set up in Nagpur.

Maratha-OBC row to tilt scales in Maharashtra

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 28 OCT

Maharashtra agriculture minister Dhananjay Munde will have to effectively counter the Maratha vote consolidation in Parli assembly segment, the hometown of late Gopinath have a BJP nominee in the fray after decades.

Just four months ago, the Maratha factor contributed to the narrow defeat of BJP candidate Pankaja Munde, cousin of Dhananjay, from the Beed Lok Sabha constituency which includes the Parli constituency.

Maratha quota sentiment remains a strong factor to reckon with in Parli, a rural constituency dominated by issues like MSP for soybean crops and unemployment.

Political observers feel Dhananjay will have to ensure the support of the OBC community to blunt the resentment in Marathas against the BJP-led government. *—PTI*

NCP head Ajit Pawar on Monday files nomination from Baramati seat PHOTO: PTI

BJP releases 2nd list for J'khand elections

BJP's Babulal Marandi, JMM leader Bebi Devi file nomination PHOTO: PTI

RANCHI, 28 OCT

BJP on Monday released its second list for the Jharkhand assembly polls, announcing Gamliyel Hembrom as its nominee from Barhait seat against Chief Minister Hemant Soren.

Hembrom had contested from Barhait in the 2019 assembly elections on an AJSU Party ticket and polled 2,573 votes, occupying the fourth position. BJP also announced the candidature of Vikash Mahto, Tundi seat.

Hemant Soren is the sitting MLA of Barhait (ST) constituency in Sahibganj district. He had won the seat, considered a JMM bastion, by a margin of 25,740 votes over his nearest rival Simon Malto.

In the Opposition camp, the BJP will contest 68 seats, the AJSU Party 10, the JD(U) two, and the LJP (Ram Vilas) one.

Former Jharkhand Congress working president Manash Sinha on Monday joined BJP ahead of the assembly polls.

JMM has written to the Election Commission demanding removal of Chief Electoral Officer K Ravi Kumar and two senior IPS officers, alleging that they were working in favour of the BJP. *—PTI*

UP CM TROLLED OVER ₹300 CHEQUE

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath faced criticism for distributing cheques worth Rs 300 to Rs 900 at the launch of the Sanskrit Scholarship Scheme, with social media users accusing the UP government of exploiting students for publicity. Dr. Shama Mohamed, a spokesperson for the Indian National Congress, posted on her X handle, "Only BJP can do this! It seems they spent more on printing the cheques than their actual value."

Old wine in new bottle: TN Oppn mocks Vijay's 'copied' TVK goals

CHENNAI, 28 OCT

Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK has said that actor-politician Vijay helmed Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam copied its ideology while main opposition AIADMK said TVK's principles are a cocktail of current political standpoints of various parties and Naam Tamizhar Katchi has ruled out chances of joining forces with the new entrant.

While Vijay openly targeted DMK and its first family in his debut public appearance for his party's inaugural event on Sunday, DMK said it has seen many rivals in its long innings and will continue to be strong.

Asked on TVK's ideological points, its hint at opposition to the office of Governor, DMK leader TKS Elangovan said, "these are all our policies, he is copying...whatever he says is what we had already said and which we are following."

TVK leader Vijay PHOTO: PTI

On the maiden conference of Vijay's party, he told PTI Videos: "This is the first conference and let us see, we have seen many parties." Outlining his party's strong ideological moorings and work over a long period of time in its 75-year old journey, Elangovan said DMK leaders went to jail fighting for people's cause and though the party had lost several elections, it continued to be strong.

Asserting that ideologically BJP is nationalist and its votebank will not be affected, BJP leader H Raja said Vijay's party may split only the votes of Dravidian parties and the DMK could be weakened. "I hope Mr Vijay would help me by speaking on Dravidian stock (ideology) and divide those votes," he told reporters. *—PTI*

MAKE OR BREAK

Waqf Bill emerges as key issue in Kerala bypolls

T'PURAM, 28 OCT

The stance of the Congress-led UDF and the CPI(M)-led LDF on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, is emerging as a topic for discussion in the by-elections being held for the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat and two Assembly segments in Kerala.

The Catholic Church, whose followers have significant influence in the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat where Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi is trying her electoral luck, has backed the Bill brought by the BJP-led government at the Centre, opposing the provisions in law.

The Church alleged that numerous properties belonging to Christian families for generations in the villages of Cherai and Munambam in the Ernakulam district have been unlawfully claimed by the Waqf Board.

Hitting out at the fronts, it stated, "When you pass a resolution to protect the Waqf law without acknowledging the tears of the affected people, the victims and those who stand with them will be forced to reconsider political stance."

Noting that even the High Court has limited authority to intervene as per the current law, and that those with complaints against the Waqf Board must approach the Waqf Tribunals, it said, "This is a backdoor law created by the government against democracy and secularism! Congress sowed it, and Waqf reaped it."

Slamming the LDF and the UDF, the editorial said those who promised justice in Munambam went to Thiruvananthapuram and passed a resolution saying not to touch the Waqf Act.

Earlier this month, the Kerala Assembly had unanimously adopted a resolution against the proposed amendment to the Wafq Act. *—PTI*

Kerala Assembly had unanimously adopted a resolution against the proposed amendment to the Wafq Act PHOTO: PTI

Priyanka to campaign in Wayanad for 2 days

WAYANAD, 28 OCT

Congress general secretary and UDF candidate for Wayanad bypoll, Priyanka Gandhi, will campaign across the hill constituency for two days from Monday, engaging with voters and addressing public meetings, party leaders said.

AICC general secretary K C Venugopal MP, and other prominent UDF leaders, are expected to join Priyanka at various programmes across the district.

Priyanka commenced her campaign by launching a scathing attack on the BJP-led Centre, alleging that the values of the Constitution are constantly being subverted under its rule.

Priyanka Gandhi PHOTO: PTI

Speaking at a corner meeting organised in Meenangadi, the AICC general secretary referred to the violence in Manipur and alleged that "planned" attacks are taking place against minorities in the country.

Priyanka also claimed that policy after policy is made to favour Modi's friends rather than the common people *—PTI*

BJP, Oppn engage in verbal clash

Ruling and Opposition members engaged in verbal clash as former judges and Waqf administrators of different states appeared before the Parliament's panel on the Waqf bill which met for the first time on Monday after TMC member Kalyan Banerjee's suspension for unruly conduct. A heated exchange among BJP and Opposition ensued, leading to a walkout. *—PTI*

Delhi police get NGT notice amid worsening air pollution

NGT claims lapse by authorities led to rise in pollution

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

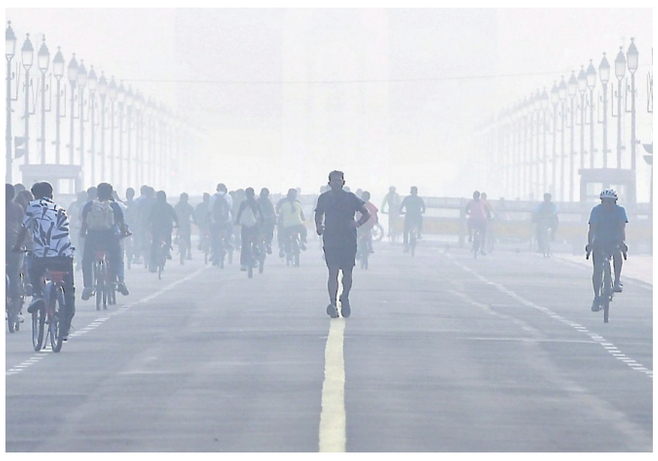
National Green Tribunal sought responses from the Delhi police chief and the special commissioner of traffic management about measures taken to mitigate air pollution due to vehicular movement and parking issues.

It also observed that a transparent process should be followed to invoke different stages of anti-pollution measure Graded Response Action Plan (GPAP).

The green body was hearing the issue of deteriorating air quality in the National Capital Region (NCR), necessitating the invoking various stages of GRAP.

In an order dated 24 October, a bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava said, "The Air Quality Index (AQI) on 23 October in Delhi was 364 in the very poor category, which reflects that there is a lapse on the part of the authorities in preventing the dip in the air quality in NCR."

Meanwhile, farm fires in Punjab, often blamed for the rise in Delhi's air pollution, have gone down by 50 per cent since last year in the post-harvest period, with little effect on the air quality in the national capital.



Delhi's air quality remains very poor with an AQI of 355 **PHOTO: PTI**

From 15 September to 27 October, Punjab has seen 1,995 farm fire cases as compared to 4,059 in the corresponding period last year, as per data from the Punjab Remote Sensing Centre.

The farm fire incidents in the period have gone down by 75 per cent since 2022. The state recorded 8,147 farm fires in 2022 in this period.

After paddy harvesting in October and November, stubble burning in Punjab, Haryana and states adjacent to Delhi are said to contribute to pollution in Delhi.

Paddy procurement is underway in Punjab.

On Sunday, Punjab saw 138 farm fires -- Ferozepur with highest such incidents, followed by Sangrur and Fatehgarh Sahib, according to data.

On the same day in 2022 and 2023, the state had seen 1,111 and 766 farm fires, respectively.

The drop in farm fire cases, however, has not had a significant effect on air pollution in Delhi, where air quality was "very poor" with an AQI reading of 355.

Also, Delhi government will deploy 10,000 civil defence volunteers, who were terminated from service last year while working as bus marshals, to aid in implementing measures related to mitigation of pollution, Chief Minister Atishi said. *—PTI*

HURTS ENERGY TRANSITION

India dependent on critical minerals' import: Report

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

India remains highly dependent on imports for minerals critical to accelerating its energy transition, with a full reliance on shipping in lithium, cobalt and nickel, according to a report released Monday.

The report, published by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), said that India's demand for critical minerals is expected to more than double by 2030, while domestic mining operations may take over a decade to start producing.

It stresses that India needs a carefully crafted import strategy to mitigate potential trade risks while balancing international relationships to secure these essential minerals.

IEEFA's report examines five critical minerals– cobalt, copper, graphite, lithium and nickel – from the perspectives of import dependency, trade dynamics, domestic availability, and global price fluctuations. The findings show that India remains largely import-dependent for these minerals and their compounds, with 100 per cent import reliance for minerals like lithium, cobalt, and nickel. "India should strive to de-risk its critical minerals sourcing by identifying new international resources and expediting domestic production," said the report's co-author Charith Konda, Energy Specialist, IEEFA. "The country can also explore investment opportunities in resource-rich, friendly nations, such as Australia and Chile, as well as African countries like Ghana and South Africa," he added. The report said India depends heavily on China for synthetic graphite and natural graphite. India has committed to achieving 500 gigawatts (GW) of non-fossil fuel-based electricity installed capacity by 2030. Currently, the country's renewable energy installed capacity stands at 201 GW, with solar energy accounting for 91 GW. *—PTI*

70-year-old man dies after son hits him with stick

AMETHI, 28 OCT

A 70-year-old man has died of injuries after his son hit him with a stick over a dispute here, police said on Monday. They said Ramnath, a resident of Mahona West in the Shukul Bazar police station area, had a disagreement with his son Manoj Kumar over some issue on Saturday night which escalated into a fight. Ramnath suffered serious injuries after being hit with a stick, following which his family took him to a community health centre, where he died during treatment on Sunday night, a police official said. Police said the body has been sent for post-mortem examination and a search is on to nab the son. *—PTI*

In UP, man sets himself on fire after axing son

BANDA, 28 OCT

A 35-year-old man killed his five-year-old son by cutting his neck with an axe and then set himself on fire inside their home in adjoining Chitrakoot, police said on Monday. The father, who survived, has been taken into custody by the police over the incident that took place Sunday at Duwari village of Mau police station area, they said. The accused told police that he killed his son in anger when the child started crying at night while he was sleeping. On hearing the noise, neighbours somehow opened the door of the room and saved Rajkumar and handed him over to the police. *—PTI*

J'khand Singhbhum district sees 36 diarrhoea cases

JAMSHEDPUR, 28 OCT

Jharkhand's East Singhbhum district administration on Monday sent a medical team to Patamda block after 36 cases of diarrhoea were reported from a village, an official said. Deputy Commissioner Ananya Mittal instructed the team to rush to Sunderpur village's Kashidih Tola to provide proper treatment to the patients. A member of the team, Dr Asad, an epidemiologist, said the villagers complained of stomachache, vomiting and loose motion. Out of the 36 patients, 13 were admitted to Patamda community health centre, seven to Ganga Memorial Hospital, three to Gurunanak Hospital, and one to Bandwan, while another was referred to MGM Hospital, he added. The condition of the rest of the patients, who were being treated in the village itself, were stated to be stable, he said. A 60-year-old woman had died of diarrhoea in the village on 21 October. Soon after that, another case was reported in Kashidih Tola on 26 October. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Bar removes 107 'fake' lawyers from roll in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

The Bar Council of India (BCI) has removed names of 107 fake lawyers from its roll between 2019 and October 2024 in Delhi as a part of its ongoing drive to maintain "integrity and professionalism". "This decisive action is aimed at eliminating fake advocates and those who no longer meet the standards of legal practice. By doing so, the BCI has tried to continue to protect the public's trust and the legal system itself from unethical practices," read a BCI statement on October 26. BCI secretary Srimanto Sen said the names of 107 fake lawyers have been struck off from the roll in Delhi alone as part of its ongoing effort to maintain the integrity and professionalism of the legal community. *—PTI*

Grant exemptions to disabled people: HC

CHENNAI, 28 OCT

Madras High Court observed that the barriers faced by persons with disabilities go beyond just physical accessibility issues, extending to deep rooted prejudice, stereotypes and misconcepts that pervaded many aspects of the society.

Justice N Anand Venkatesh made the observation in a recent order while allowing a petition from B Vidyasagar, Assistant Engineer, Tamil Nadu Housing Board, a disabled person, seeking a direction to the authorities not to insist him to produce the certificate of passing the Tamil Language Test to grant pending increments and promotion. The judge said from education and employment to health care and public services, people with disabilities often face significant obstinance. The court said the petitioner has not been given any increments and attendant benefits, since he has not cleared the Tamil language test. It directed the authorities to extend all attendant benefits to him. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Bomb found in college near Manipur Guv's home

IMPHAL, 28 OCT

A hand grenade was found at the gates of GP Women's College, located less than 100 metres from the Raj Bhavan here, on Monday morning, police said.

The incident triggered panic among passersby.

Police, after being informed about the presence of the grenade, cordoned off the area, an officer said.

Later, a bomb disposal squad removed the grenade from the spot and disposed of it, he said.

The college is located less than 100m from Raj Bhavan and 300m from the chief minister's official residence, and Manipur Police headquarters.

A hand-written note, stating 'glory to the proletarian students', was left at the spot.

The incident comes amid several educational institutions in Imphal Valley reporting extortion threats.

Security personnel stand guard outside the Raj Bhavan in Imphal West, Manipur on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Students of the college later staged an incident against the incident.

They held placards and raised slogans against the incident, demanding that such acts are not repeated.

Meanwhile, three cadres of various Imphal Valley-based militant outfits have been arrested for allegedly extorting the public, a police statement said.

One cadre each of Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), Kangleipak Communist Party (Noyon) and Kangleipak Communist Party (People's War Group) were arrested from Manipur's Imphal West and Bishnupur on Sunday, it said.

The militants of KYKL and KCP (Noyon) outfits, identified as Thongam Naoba Meitei, 21 and Huidrom Prabhash Singh alias Nonil, 23, respectively, were arrested in Narankonjil area in Imphal West district, the statement said.

Another militant, identified as Oinam Amar Singh alias Joy, 47, belonging to KCP (People's War Group), was nabbed in Keibul Chingmeirong Mayai Leikai in Bishnupur district.

They were allegedly involved in extorting the general public and traders, it added. *—PTI*

Police takes away two associates of a Turkey-based drug smuggler Navpreet Singh, who were arrested in the cross-border smuggling **PHOTO: PTI**

Punjab: 6kg heroin seized after record drug haul

CHANDIGARH, 28 OCT

Punjab Police on Monday said it has arrested a man with six kg heroin following its probe into the 105kg drug haul in the state.

A cross-border smuggling racket was unearthed on Sunday with the arrest of two associates of a Turkey-based drugs smuggler and seizure of 105 kg of heroin. Six weapons were also seized during the operation.

Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said in the follow up investigations of the 105 kg heroin haul, police nabbed Lovepreet Singh and recovered six kg heroin from his possession.

Lovepreet Singh was to handover the consignment of heroin, which he picked from Hanumangarh in Rajasthan, to another drug peddler Navjot Singh who was arrested on Sunday.

Police on Sunday had arrested Navjot Singh, a resident of Guru Tegh Bahadur Colony in Baba Bakala, Amritsar, and Lovepreet Kumar, a resident of Kala Sanghian in Kapurthala in the 105 kg heroin recovery case.

Besides heroin, police had also seized a huge quantity of scheduled drugs. *—PTI*

Kerala books case over disruption of Thrissur Pooram

THRISSUR, 28 OCT

The Kerala Police has registered a case regarding the alleged disruption of the iconic Thrissur Pooram festival in April this year.

"The FIR was lodged under charges of 120 (B) (conspiracy), 295 (A) (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) and 153 (A) (promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc.). The investigation will be carried out by the SIT," said an official.

The government earlier this month announced a three-tier investigation into the disruption of the Thrissur Pooram festivities following a report submitted by then ADGP (law and order) MR Ajith Kumar to State Police Chief in September.

The row regarding the disruption of Thrissur Pooram, a significant annual event in the cultural calendar of Thrissur, has created a political storm in Kerala. *—PTI*

KIN DEMAND DEATH ROW

Kerala honour killing case: Two get life term

PALAKKAD, 28 OCT

A Kerala court on Monday sentenced two people to life imprisonment in the sensational honour killing of a 27-year-old man in Thenkurussi in this district nearly four years ago.

Additional Sessions Court 1 judge Justice Vinayaka Rao R found Prabhu Kumar and Suresh, the first and second accused, guilty of murdering the man for marrying Kumar's daughter.

The court also imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 on each of the convicts.

The judge ruled that both the accused should undergo rigorous imprisonment for two years.

The court also handed three years of rigorous imprisonment to the accused for offences under IPC Section 506 (criminal intimidation).

The incident occurred on 25 December, 2020.

Anish was murdered by his wife's father Prabhu Kumar and uncle Suresh just 88 days after his marriage to Haritha, who belonged to another caste.

PHOTO: ANI

The prosecution argued that Anish's marriage to Haritha, who came from a family with financial and caste privileges, was the reason behind the murder.

Haritha and Anish's parents expressed disappointment over the verdict and said they would approach the higher court with an appeal. "We expected that the accused would either get a death sentence or at least a double life term. This punishment was too small for the gravity of the crime they had committed," Haritha told reporters. *—PTI*

MP HIKES DA TO 50% FOR WORKERS FOR DEEPAVALI

BHOPAL, 28 OCT

Madhya Pradesh government has increased Dearness Allowance (DA) to 50 per cent from 46 per cent for its employees ahead of Diwali, an official said on Monday.

The hike will be effective from 1 January, 2024, the official said.

Talking to reporters, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said, "My congratulations to everyone as this joy of enhancement in DA has doubled as it has coincided with Deepavali and the state's Foundation Day on 1 November."

Undivided Madhya Pradesh was constituted on 1 November, 1956 and Chhattisgarh was carved out of it on the same date in 2000.

Yadav said the state finance department approved 46 per cent DA in an order dated 14 March, 2024. It was effective from 1 July, 2023, and the arrears were paid in instalments. *—PTI*

IN CHHATTISGARH

13 get eye infection after cataract surgery

DANTEWADA, 28 OCT

Thirteen people were admitted to a hospital in Raipur after they contracted an eye infection following cataract surgery at a government medical facility in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district, officials said on Monday.

This promoted the Health Department to order a probe into the matter following which three healthcare personnel, including the doctor who performed the cataract surgeries at the Dantewada district hospital, were suspended on Sunday.

All the 13 people who got the eye infection underwent cataract surgery at the Dantewada district hospital between 18 to 22, October Dantewada Collector Mayank Chaturvedi told PTI.

"When one-two cases came to light, we launched an exercise to trace the patients who underwent surgeries at the hospital in the last 15-20 days to examine the condition of their operated eyes. We covered 80 patients, and 13 of them have so far been found to be suffering from infection in their operated eye," he said. Despite learning on 20 October about the infection to a patient who was operated on 18 October, the doctor concerned continued performing surgeries till 22 October and allegedly did not inform senior authorities about the case, the official said. The Dantewada district hospital has four operation theatres and the target is to operate 20 cataract patients every week, he said. The probe team found that standard protocols for cataract surgery were not properly followed and the operation theatre was not properly sanitised before the surgeries, an official said. Prime facie, negligence was found on the part of the hospital's eye surgeon Dr Geeta Netam, eye assistant officer Dipti Toppo and staff nurse Mamta Vaide, state Health and Family Welfare Minister Shyam Bihari Jaiswal told reporters on Sunday. *—PTI*

All the 13 people who got the eye infection underwent cataract surgery at the Dantewada district hospital between 18 to 22 October **PHOTO: ANI**

Man finds fungus in Real Fruit juice

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

A man in Faridabad discovered fungus in a sealed Tetra pack of Real Fruit Juice he had purchased from DMart.

The shocking find came after he took a sip of the juice, began to choke, and then poured the contents into a glass, revealing visible contamination.

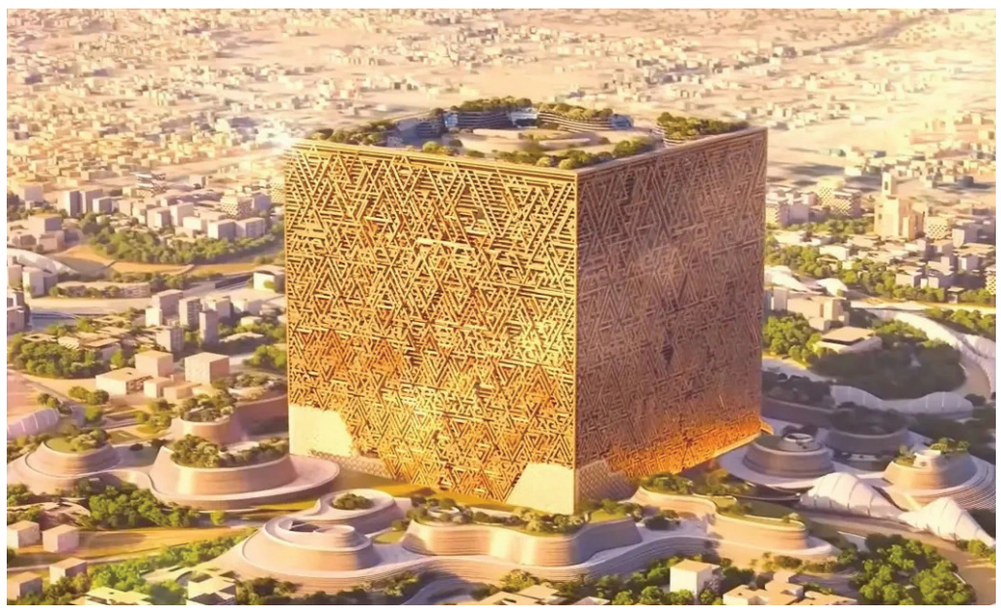
In a post on Reddit titled "Found contamination inside a sealed 'Tetra pack' of Real Fruit Juice!" the user, known as TheAxiomaticGaming, shared. Dabur, the manufacturer of Real Fruit Juice, since apologised and confirmed that the issue was due to fungal growth. TheAxiomaticGaming mentioned he would receive a replacement for the contaminated product. However, the incident ignited a broader discussion about food safety in India, with many comment-

PHOTO: X

ers expressing their concerns. One user lamented, "None can be trusted these days; food safety in India is a joke," highlighting growing anxiety over the quality of food products and the use of controversial ingredients like palm olein and titanium dioxide. *—Salar News*

20 EMPIRE STATES IN 1 CUBE

Saudi Arabia set to break world's largest building record by constructing a $50 billion Mukaab project, in Riyadh. The colossal cube is planned to reach 1,300 feet in height and 1,200 feet in width. The Mukaab will have the volume to hold 20 Empire State Buildings, marking a new chapter in the Kingdom's drive. It is funded by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund and is a cornerstone of the Vision 2030 initiative led by Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman. It will house 104,000 residential units, 9,000 hotel rooms, and other amenities *PHOTO: X*



US polls & its effects on economy, stock markets

With the US presidential election on a knife edge and less than a week away, financial markets are watching with bated breath.

There's no shortage of reasons to be nervous. Both sides have outlined radically different visions of America's economic future, with major implications for rest of world.

All of this stands against the backdrop of simmering tensions with China and an ongoing crisis in the Middle East. The price of gold – a common way for investors to hedge against uncertainty – has soared to record heights.

Many have been speculating about what might be in store for the stock market and the economy – both in the United States and here in Australia.

Obviously, that depends on far more than just who is sitting in the Oval Office. However, looking at history still tells an interesting – and perhaps surprising – story.

Stocks in markets are globally owned. Elections reflect the cycle of global risk aversion, which in turn affects local market *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

Elephants, donkeys, bulls and bears

In the United States, both sides of the political divide are subject to some oversimplifying stereotypes.

Democrats are often seen as the party of proactive government spending, favouring policies that redistribute wealth through taxation. Republicans, on the other hand, have a reputation as the business-friendly party of small government, favouring more passive policies with lower tax rates.

Research by Lubos Pastor and Pietro Veronesi from the University of Chicago examined the period between 1927 and 2015.

They found average growth in gross domestic product (GDP) was 4.86 per cent under Democratic presidents. Under Republican presidencies, it averaged 1.7 per cent.

Over the same period, the US share market's "equity risk premium" was also 10.9 per cent higher under Democratic presidents than Republicans. In the years from 1999 to 2015, it was even higher under presidents – 17.4 per cent.

This is the excess rate of return that can be earned by investing in shares above the "risk-free rate" (such as the interest rate on a savings account).

Why is it worth looking at the risk premium instead of total share market returns? Because it helps separate out the effect of interest rates.

The return on assets like shares is comprised of the risk-free rate from banks plus this risk premium. Risk-free rates are largely determined by central banks, which in most countries are independent from the government.

What might be driving this effect?

Whether this performance reflects good luck or good policies is much harder to answer. If the effect was arising from superior policy decisions, it would imply voters have been repeatedly failing to reward good government.

Pastor and Veronesi argue something different – that when the economy is weak and stock prices are low, voters are more risk-averse. That can lead them to prefer the wealth redistribution policies of the Democrats.

The last three transitions from Republican to Democratic presidencies support this theory. Bill Clinton was elected shortly after the 1990-91 recession, Barack Obama at the peak of the global financial crisis, and Joe Biden during the pandemic.

As the economy recovers from a crisis, stock prices often increase. Pastor and Veronesi's thesis suggests that the election – and the good performance - of Democratic presidents comes down to the timing of voters' heightened risk aversion.

Highly interlinked economies

Historically, monthly stock returns in Australia and the US have been highly correlated – my calculations show this is even more so in election years.

Correlation famously doesn't say anything about causation, just that when we see change in one, we typically see a similar change in the other. That means some of the effects we described earlier can be felt here (and around the world), as well.

Expanding their long-term analysis internationally, Pastor and Veronesi found that the average equity risk premium of Australian stocks was also higher under Democratic presidencies in the US – by 11.3 per cent!

Similar higher returns were also observed in the United Kingdom – 7.3 per cent. And they were even larger in Canada, France, and Germany – all about 13 per cent.

Two factors may help explain why what happens in the US is so wide-reaching. Stocks in these markets are globally owned. US presidential elections may reflect the cycle of global risk aversion, which in turn affects local stock markets.

A stock market boom?

Will a win by the Democrats in November usher in a stock market boom? It's unlikely, for two reasons.

First, a win by the Democrats would be a continuation, not a transition from a Republican president. It would not represent policy changes favoured by more risk-averse voters.

Second, it would be a Democratic win in a booming economy. The US economy has been going strong since the end of the pandemic.

It added 254,000 jobs in September, the strongest job growth in six months. It also grew at an annualised pace of 3 per cent in the second quarter of 2024, its average of below 2 per cent over past decade.

Other research suggests some important caveats, too. On average, the short-term market reaction to an election does not favour the Democrats or the Republicans.

However, a surprise win by a Republican – that is, one contrary to prediction markets – is associated with 2-3 per cent higher returns around election days.

One possible reason for this is that unlike voters, equity fund managers are likely to be Republican-leaning. A surprise win by favoured candidate can boost prices when winner is declared. *—PTI*

SALAR ساہر

'Carbon cut plans' miles short of 2030 goals: UN

Current national climate plans of countries would cumulatively reduce global emissions by only 2.6 per cent by 2030 compared to 2019 levels, leaving a large gap in efforts to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, according to a new UN report.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a UN body that evaluates climate science, said global emissions need to be reduced by 43 per cent by 2030 and 60 per cent by 2035 to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The new UN report synthesizes information from the 168 latest national climate plans communicated by 195 parties to the Paris Agreement, recorded in the registry of nationally determined contributions as of September 9, 2024.

Total global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (excluding land use, land-use change and forestry, or LULUCF), factoring in the latest NDCs, would be around 51.5 (48.3–54.7) gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2030.

"These would be 49.8 per cent higher than in 1990, 8.3 per cent higher than in 2010, and 2.6 per cent lower than in 2019, and 2.8 per cent lower than the estimated level for 2025, indicating the possibility of global emissions peaking before 2030," the report said.

UN climate chief Simon Stiell said the report's findings are stark but not surprising. "Current national climate plans fall miles short of what's needed to stop global heating from crippling every economy and wrecking billions of lives and livelihoods across every country."

New UN report synthesizes information from the 168 latest national climate plans communicated by 195 parties *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

He said the next round of national climate plans -- which countries need to submit by February 2025 -- must deliver a dramatic increase in climate action and ambition.

"While these plans are not one-size-fits-all and are nationally determined, they must have ambitious new emissions targets that are economy-wide, covering all greenhouse gases, keeping 1.5 degrees alive. They must be broken down into sectors and gases. And they must be credible, backed up by substantive regulations, laws, and funding to ensure goals are met and plans implemented," he said.

At this year's UN climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November, countries are required to reach an agreement on new climate finance that developed countries need to provide, starting in 2025, to fight and adapt to climate change.

Developing and poorer countries see an ambitious new climate finance goal as crucial to increase ambition. They argue that expecting them to do more, especially when many are still struggling with poverty and inadequate infrastructure amid worsening climate impacts, undermines the principle of equity.

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), adopted in 1992, high-income, industrialised nations (referred to as Annex II countries) -- who have historically benefited from industrialisation and contributed the most to greenhouse gas emissions -- are responsible for providing finance and technology to help developing countries combat and adapt to climate change.

These countries include the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and EU member states such as Germany and France. *—PTI*

At this year's UN climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November, countries are required to reach an agreement on new climate finance that developed countries need to provide *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Israel, Iran playing an unending game of chicken and egg

Israel's strike on military targets in Iran over the weekend is becoming a more routine occurrence in the decades-long rivalry between the two states.

Israel has conducted low-level or "unofficial" operations in Iran in the past, but since the 7 October, 2023, Hamas attacks on southern Israel and subsequent Israeli war in Gaza, tensions between Iran and Israel have spilled over into direct military confrontation for the first time.

While the consequences of this particular strike are not yet clear, it does show that the violence in the Middle East is not winding down any time soon. This is also a clear example of how easily one conflict – in this case, Gaza – can expand into new conflicts with unintended consequences.

But there are other dimensions at play beyond Gaza and the Palestinians. Relations between Israel and post-revolutionary Iran have never been good. The Iranian government has called for the destruction of Israel, and Israel has used its foreign intelligence service, Mossad, to disrupt Iran's nuclear programme with assassinations and cyber warfare.

In its most recent direct attack on Iran, Israel struck military targets from the air in the provinces of Tehran, Khuzestan and Ilam, causing minor damage to military installations and killing four soldiers. Israel had consulted the US State Department about its plans, but the US was not directly involved in the strikes.

Though Tehran has played down the extent of the damage, the Iranian regime has not ruled out a response, which should keep the region on edge for weeks to come. In fact, some hardliners in the Iranian parliament say the strike crossed a red line and a response is necessary.

Who's to blame here?

Answering the question of "who started it?" in this conflict is not that simple.

If you were to ask the Iranians, they would say the first escalation came in early April when Israel struck an Iranian diplomatic compound in Damascus, Syria, killing two senior Iranian generals, among others.

If you were to ask the Israelis, they would say that attacks by Hezbollah in northern Israel over the past year are effectively Iran throwing the first stone, as Hezbollah is a militant proxy of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Iran has responded to Israeli strikes on its territory twice with barrages of rockets and explosive drones – once in retaliation for the consulate strike and again in early October after Ismail Haniyeh, one of the leaders of Hamas, was killed by a strike in Tehran. Israel's latest airstrike was in direct response to Iran's early October retaliation.

The Iranian government has called for the destruction of Israel, and Israel has used its foreign intelligence service, Mossad, to disrupt Iran's nuclear programme with assassinations *PHOTO: PTI*

US President Joe Biden said after the latest Israeli attack, "I hope this is the end" – an effort to urge both parties to halt their escalations. But unfortunately it is not his call to make.

Maintaining a delicate balance

There is a reason why direct military strikes between nations are rare, even between sworn enemies. When attacking another state, it is difficult to know exactly how they will respond, though a retaliatory strike is almost often expected.

This is because defence forces are not just used for fighting and winning wars – they are also vital to deterring them. When a fighting force is attacked, it's important for it to strike back to maintain the perception it can deter future attacks and make a display of its capabilities. This is what is happening right now between Israel and Iran – neither side wants to appear weak.

- Both sides have reasons to avoid a larger conflict. Israel has just opened a second front against its adversaries by targeting Hezbollah in Lebanon and would face the largest conventional fighting

If this is the case, where does the escalation end? De-escalation is essentially a game of chicken – one side has to be content with not responding to an attack to take the temperature down.

But there are equal pressures on states to choose to respond to an attack or de-escalate.

On the one hand, showing that your military is incapable of responding to an external threat is unacceptable, and theoretically invites further attacks. An unused deterrent is not a deterrent.

On the other, there's the risk a retaliation could spiral into all-out conflict with your adversary. In the case of Israel and Iran this would almost certainly mean the involvement of US forces – a dire prospect.

Thankfully, this outcome is unlikely. There are signs both Iran and Israel are using their strikes to "save face" and maintain their deterrence capability rather than escalate tensions further, given the fact both made strikes on non-essential targets.

Both sides have reasons to avoid a larger conflict. Israel has just opened a second front against its adversaries by targeting Hezbollah in Lebanon and would face the largest conventional fighting force in the region if an all-out war broke out with Iran.

And Iran's leaders have been under pressure domestically in recent years due to widespread public discontent. Iran would much rather continue to attack Israel through its proxies and maintain plausible deniability, as a direct war could threaten the regime's survival.

But this latest strike is also a reminder that the longer conflicts go on, the less likely they are to remain contained. For over a year, the war in Gaza has raised tensions in the region to a fever pitch. A ceasefire would go a long way to reducing these tensions and stop the spread of political violence across the region – before it's too late. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X/ @ZANUPF

Botswana holds elections amid challenges

GABORONE, 28 OCT

Botswana votes in a national election this week that will decide if the ruling party extends a 58-year stretch in power in a southern African country that is a leading diamond producer and often held up as one of the most stable and least corrupt democracies on the continent. President Mokgweetsi Masisi of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party, or BDP, is seeking a second and final term in office, although Wednesday's election isn't directly for president. Voters will decide the makeup of Parliament and lawmakers will later elect the president. While the BDP has dominated Botswanan politics since independence from Britain in 1966, this election comes amid new economic uncertainty for a nation that relies heavily on diamond mining. Botswana is the second biggest producer of diamonds behind Russia and has been responsible for all the biggest rough gems found in the past decade. *—PTI*

McD's Quarter Pounder back after E coli outbreak

LOS ANGELES, 28 OCT

McDonald's announced on Sunday that Quarter Pounders will again be on its menu at hundreds of its restaurants after testing ruled out beef patties as the source of the outbreak of E coli poisoning tied to the popular burgers that killed one person and sickened at least 75 others across 13 states. The US Food and Drug Administration continues to believe that slivered onions from a single supplier are the likely source of contamination, McDonald's said in a statement. It said it will resume selling the Quarter Pounder at affected restaurants —- without slivered onions — in the coming week. As of Friday, the outbreak had expanded to at least 75 people sick in 13 states, federal health officials said. *—PTI*

Woman charged for assaulting Australian senator

MELBOURNE, 28 OCT

A woman appeared in an Australian court on Monday charged with a May assault on the Indigenous senator who shouted at King Charles III during a royal reception last week. The assault allegedly occurred on May 25, when independent Sen. Lidia Thorpe attended an Australian Rules Football match in her hometown of Melbourne. Ebony Bell, 28, appeared by a video link in Melbourne Magistrates' Court. She has been charged with two counts of recklessly causing injury and three counts of unlawful assault at a stadium. A police statement described the 51-year-old senator's injuries from the alleged assault as "minor". *—PTI*

Pak starts new polio vaccination drive in 16 districts

ISLAMABAD, 28 OCT

Pakistan on Monday started its third nationwide polio campaign to vaccinate 45 million children against the crippling disease as the virus was detected in the environmental samples from 16 districts. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif inaugurated the campaign during a ceremony at the Prime Minister's House on World Polio Day last week, the Dawn newspaper reported. He also administered polio drops to children there. The week-long vaccination campaign, which will run till November 3, aims to tackle the alarming spread of polio in the country, which has reported 41 cases this year. During the drive, special teams of health departments will go door to door to inoculate more than 45 million children. Children will also be given Vitamin-A supplements during the campaign for additional immunity, according a report. *—PTI*

Israel kills 1,000 during N Gaza siege in 3 weeks

About 100 fighters detained at Kamal Adwan Hospital

GAZA, 28 OCT

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has proposed a two-day truce in Gaza that would potentially pave the way for a long-term ceasefire, as Israel's genocide has killed more than 1,000 Palestinians in the northern areas of the Strip in less than a month.

El-Sisi's proposal, which includes exchanging four Israeli captives held in Gaza for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, came as thousands of trapped civilians endure relentless Israeli attacks that have killed at least 50 people, including five journalists, since Sunday.

At a news conference in Cairo on Sunday, el-Sisi said the 48-hour lull in fighting and prisoner exchange would be followed by more talks in the next 10 days, with the hope that negotiators could hammer out a peace deal.

Out of 251 captives seized by Hamas during the 7 October, 2023 attack inside the Israeli territory, 97 are believed to be still held in Gaza, including 34 the Israeli military claims are dead. More than 100 captives were released during a week-long truce last November.

El-Sisi did not say whether the plan had been formally presented to either Israel or Hamas. But efforts to defuse the conflict have resumed in the Qatari capital of Doha with the directors of the CIA and Israel's Mossad taking part. There was no immediate comment from Israel or Hamas on the plan. Egypt, alongside Qatar and the United States, has for months been mediating indirect talks with little success. Among the key issues preventing a breakthrough has been Hamas's insistence that Israel withdraw completely from Gaza, which Israeli officials have repeatedly rejected.

Al Jazeera's senior political analyst Marwan Bishara said with the US, Egypt and Qatar involved in the negotiations, "there is a chance for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to get something more today than what he would have gotten back in June."

Al Jazeera correspondents in Gaza on Monday said the latest Israeli attack on a group of people in the Shujayea neighbourhood of Gaza City in the north of the Strip has killed at least three people. Another Palestinian was killed in a separate Israeli attack in central Gaza's Nuseirat refugee camp, according to the Wafa news agency. *—Al Jazeera*

IDF issues evacuation warning to parts of Lebanon's Tyre ahead of strikes on Hezbollah targets **PHOTO: PTI**

X SUSPENDS NEW ACCOUNT ON BEHALF OF IRAN'S SUPREME LEADER

JERUSALEM, 28 OCT

The social platform X has suspended a new account on behalf of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei that posted messages in Hebrew.

The account was suspended early Monday with a brief note appended to it saying: "X suspends accounts which violate the X Rules". It wasn't immediately clear what the violation was.

The Elon Musk-owned social media company did not respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

The move came after Israel openly attacked Iran for the first time this weekend. Khamenei said in a speech on Sunday that Israel's strikes — in response to Iran's ballistic missile attack this month — "should not be exaggerated nor downplayed", while stopping short of calling for retaliation.

The X account opened Sunday with a message in Hebrew reading: "In the name of God, the most merciful," a standard Islamic greeting. *—PTI*

POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

Japan's ruling party loses lower house majority

TOKYO, 28 OCT

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's ruling coalition lost a majority in the 465-seat lower house in a key parliamentary election on Sunday, a punishment by voters' outrage over the governing party's extensive financial scandals.

Ishiba's Liberal Democratic Party remains the top party in Japan's parliament, and a change of government is not expected. But the results create political uncertainty.

Falling short of a majority makes it difficult for Ishiba to get his party's policies through parliament, and he may need to find a third coalition partner.

The LDP's coalition retains a majority in the less powerful upper house.

All told, the ruling coalition with junior partner Komeito secured 215 seats, down sharply from the majority of 279 it previously held, according to Japanese media. It is the coalition's worst result since briefly falling from power in 2009.

Ishiba took office on October 1 and immediately ordered the election in hopes of shoring up support after his predecessor, Fumio Kishida, failed to address public outrage over the LDP's scandals.

Ishiba said the LDP would still lead a ruling coalition and tackle key policies, compile a planned supplementary budget and pursue political reform. He indicated that his party is open to cooperating with Opposition groups if that suits the public's expectations.

The Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, led by centrist leader Yoshihiko Noda, made huge gains to 148 seats, from its previous 98. "We accomplished our goal of preventing the ruling coalition from a majority, which was a major achievement," Noda said.

Noda called the election a rare chance for a change of government, and said he seeks to lead a coalition with other opposition groups to do so. But his party has had trouble finding partners, and many voters were sceptical about the opposition's ability and inexperience. *—PTI*

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba attends a news conference at the LDP's headquarters in Japan, on Monday **PHOTO: ASAHI SHIMBUN**

Ukrainian servicemen cover a tanker near the border area in Kharkiv on Monday **PHOTO: EPA**

Russian forces thwart attempted cross-border assault from Ukraine

KYIV, 28 OCT

Russian forces thwarted an attempt at another cross-border incursion by Ukraine into southwestern Russia, a local official reported Sunday, months after Kyiv staged a bold assault on its nuclear-armed enemy that Moscow is still struggling to halt.

An "armed group" sought Sunday to breach the border between Ukraine and Russia's Bryansk region, its governor, Aleksandr Bogomaz, said but was beaten back. Bogomaz did not clarify whether Ukrainian soldiers carried out the alleged attack, but claimed on Sunday evening that the situation was "stable and under control" by the Russian military.

There was no immediate acknowledgement or response from Ukrainian officials.

The region neighbours Kursk province, where Ukraine launched a surprise push on 6 August that rattled the Kremlin and constituted the largest attack on Russia since World War II.

Hundreds of Russian prisoners were blindfolded and ferried away in trucks in the opening moments of the lightning advance, and Ukraine's battle-hardened units swiftly pressed on across hundreds of square kilometres of territory.

Responsibility for previous incursions into Russia's Belgorod and Bryansk regions have been claimed by two murky groups: the Russian Volunteer Corps and the Freedom of Russia Legion. Russian officials and state media have sought to downplay the significance of Kyiv's thunderous run in Kursk, but the country's forces have so far been unable to dislodge Ukrainian troops from the province.

North Korean units were detected Wednesday in Kursk.

The soldiers had undergone several weeks of training at bases in eastern Russia and had been equipped with clothes for the upcoming winter, GUR said in a statement late Thursday. It did not provide evidence for its claims. *—PTI*

Borissov appears winner of Bulgaria's Parl elections

SOFIA, 28 OCT

The centre-right GERB party of ex-premier Boyko Borissov appears to be the winner of Bulgaria's parliamentary election, the country's central electoral commission said Monday, with 98 per cent of the ballots counted.

Results showed the GERB party receiving 26.5 per cent of the vote, nearly 12 percentage points more than the pro-Western reformist bloc led by the We Continue the Change party. Seven other parties also appear to have gained seats in the 240-seat chamber, according to the latest results.

The far-right, ultranationalist and Populist Party Vazrazhdane came in third with 13.5 per cent of the vote. Capitalising on pro-Russian sentiments shared by many in this former communist nation, it demands that Bulgaria lift sanctions against Russia, stop helping Ukraine, and hold a referendum on its membership in NATO.

The Movement for Rights and Freedoms, which traditionally represented Bulgaria's large ethnic Turkish minority, recently split into two rival factions, one around party founder Ahmed Dogan, and the other behind US-sanctioned businessman and former media tycoon Delyan Peevski. Both factions entered parliament — the first with 7 per cent, and the latter with 11 per cent of the vote.

The remaining seats in the chamber will be divided between four small populist and pro-Russian groups, among them the Socialist Party — heir of the once-almighty Communist Party.It could take days before the final official results are announced. If confirmed, Borissov will be handed a mandate to form his fourth government. *—PTI*

GERB party receiving 26.5 per cent of the vote, nearly 12 percentage points more than the pro-Western reformist bloc **PHOTO: X/@STIRILETVR**

4 INDIANS KILLED IN SINGLE-VEHICLE CRASH IN CANADA

OTTAWA, 28 OCT

Four Indian nationals were killed and one injured when the car they were travelling in crashed and burst into flames in Canada's Ontario province, authorities said.

The accident occurred last week on Thursday in the Lake Shore Boulevard East and Cherry Street area of Toronto city, police said in a press release. The five people, between the ages of 25-32, were travelling in a Tesla when it "lost control and struck the guard rail and then a concrete pillar" before bursting into flames, the press release said.

"We have gathered some evidence so far to suggest that speed was a factor," Toronto Police Duty Inspector Phillip Sinclair was quoted as saying by the Toronto Sun newspaper. Four of the car occupants were pronounced dead on the scene by the police officials responding to the accident, the press release said. The fifth occupant, a 25-year-old woman, was transported to a hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

She was rescued by a passing motorist who stopped to help, according to the report. "Heartfelt condolences on tragic loss of Indian nationals in car accident that took place yesterday in Toronto," the Indian Consulate in Toronto said. Police have asked residents and drivers who may have dash camera footage or witnessed the event to contact investigators. *—PTI*

A WEEK TO GO

US voters concerned about post-election violence: AP-NORC poll

WASHINGTON, 28 OCT

American voters are approaching the Presidential election with deep unease about what could follow, including the potential for political violence, attempts to overturn the election results and its broader implications for democracy, according to a new poll.

The findings of the survey, conducted by Associated Press-NORC Centre for Public Affairs Research, speak to persistent concerns about the fragility of the world's oldest democracy, nearly four years after former President Donald Trump's refusal to accept the 2020 election results inspired a mob of his supporters to storm the US Capitol in a violent attempt to stop the peaceful transfer of power.

About 4 in 10 registered voters say they are 'extremely' or 'very' concerned about violent attempts to overturn the results **PHOTO: PTI**

About 4 in 10 registered voters say they are "extremely" or "very" concerned about violent attempts to overturn the results after the November election.

Trump's wide-ranging attempts to reject the will of the voters and remain in power after his 2020 loss have led to concerns that he will again fail to concede should he lose to Vice President Kamala Harris.

Nearly 9 in 10 voters said the loser of the presidential election is obligated to concede once every state has finished counting its votes and legal challenges are resolved, including about 8 in 10 Republicans. But only about one-third of voters expect Trump to accept the results and concede if he loses. Democrats and Republicans have widely divergent views on the matter: About two-thirds of Republican voters think Trump would concede, compared to only about 1 in 10 Democrats. *—PTI*

> **I think we can cut at least $2 trillion from the budget which will be helpful for reshaping the government spending**
>
> -Elon Musk, Tesla CEO

Former US president's wife Melania Trump's surprise speech at Madison Square Garden on Sunday marked her debut appearance on her husband's campaign trail with days to go until the US election. The former first lady attended the RNC in Milwaukee and the Al Smith dinner in New York City but has, for the most part, been absent. On Sunday, her appearance was not on a pre-released list of speakers **PHOTO: PTI**

Rupee settles on flat note, up 1p at 84.07 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 28 OCT

The rupee traded on a flat to positive note and settled 1 paisa higher at 84.07 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, on positive domestic markets and a sharp decline in crude oil prices. Forex traders said the rupee traded in a narrow range during the day as the strong dollar weighed on the local unit, while positive domestic equities, weak crude oil prices and suspected intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) supported the local currency at lower levels. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.08 against the greenback. It traded in a tight range and ended at 84.07, registering a rise of 1 paisa over its previous close. *—PTI*

PHOTO:PTI

Gold declines ₹400 to ₹81,100 10/g; silver remains flat

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

Gold prices fell Rs 400 to Rs 81,100 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid weak trends in the overseas markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity had revisited its all-time of Rs 81,500 and Rs 81,100 per 10 grams, respectively, on Saturday. However, silver remained flat at Rs 99,500 per kg. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity declined Rs 400 to Rs 80,700 per 10 grams on Monday. Ease in demand by jewellers and stockists in the local markets amid sluggish trend in the global markets led to a decline in gold prices, traders said. *—PTI*

Airtel bats for another round of tariff hike

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

Bharti Airtel MD Gopal Vittal on Tuesday batted for another industry-wide tariff hike, arguing that returns on capital employed (ROCE) in the sector continue to lag in India. In the earnings statement on Monday, Vittal said that the company's balance sheet remains solid, supported by cash generation and continued deleveraging. During the July-September quarter, Bharti Airtel said it prepaid another tranche of Rs 8,465 crore of high-cost spectrum dues. "At the same time, we believe that industry needs further tariff repair for sustained investments given that ROCE for India is still only 11 per cent," Vittal said. In the past two years or so, telecom operators in India hiked tariffs twice by a cumulative 40 per cent. The telecom operator reported that its consolidated revenues for the July-September quarter were at Rs 41,473 crore, up 12 on a yearly basis, and 7.7 per cent on a quarterly basis. *—ANI*

Biocon ranked No 9 by US magazine's Best Employers

BENGALURU, 28 OCT

Global pharmaceuticals company Biocon has been ranked among the top 10 employers in the biotech, pharma, and biopharma sectors by the US-based Science magazine, securing No. 9 spot. Biocon first appeared n 2012 and has been included every year since Biocon Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar Shaw said, "Biocon has always been R&D led, fostering a culture of ideation, experimentation, and collaboration, keeping patients at the core of its business, which has led it to be placed amongst the 'Top 10 Global Employers' several years in a row by Science Magazine. These attributes are appreciated by our people, who are united by the shared purpose of making affordable, high-quality medicines accessible and available to those in need, worldwide." *—Salar News*

Sept sees record ₹1.85L cr of fundraising through IPOs

The share funds climb from 37% in FY22 to 52% in FY25

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

The recent trend in equities shows that Indian companies are going public to raise fresh funds.

According to a report by the National Stocks Exchange (NSE), the share of funds raised through fresh IPO listings has grown significantly, climbing from 37 per cent in FY22 to 52 per cent in FY25. This trend indicates that a greater portion of funds raised via IPOs now comes from new equities rather than selling by existing shareholders.

The report also highlighted that the overall fundraising through equity and debt have witnessed a substantial boost, totalling Rs 1.85 lakh crore in September 2024.

It said "The share of funds raised through fresh listing as proportion of overall funds raised through IPO has been steadily rising from 37 per cent in FY22 to 52 per cent in FY25 (As on September 30th, 2024)".

A closer look at the equity markets shows that funds raised through mainboard IPOs rose by 0.8 per cent month-on-month to reach Rs 14,825 crore in September. Of this fresh equity issuance accounted for 54 per cent, while the remainder came from the sale of shares by existing shareholders through the Offer for Sale (OFS) route.

However, in April this year, funds raised through fresh listings was only Rs 5055 crore.

On the SME front, the NSE report noted that, the capital raised through IPOs on the NSE EMERGE platform, which caters to small and medium-sized enterprises, experienced a dramatic increase of 81 per cent month-on-month.

Debt markets also saw a notable uptick in activity, with overall debt issuance rising 27.4 per cent month-on-month PHOTO: AI

The amount raised reached an all-time high of Rs 1,194 crore in September, with 95 per cent of this capital sourced from new equity issuances.

Additionally, there was strong growth in other forms of equity fundraising, with capital raised through follow-on public offerings (FPO), rights issues, preferential allotments, and qualified institutional placements (QIPs) jumping 50 per cent month-on-month to Rs 23,993 crore.

Debt markets also saw a notable uptick in activity, with overall debt issuance rising 27.4 per cent month-on-month to reach Rs 1.37 lakh crore in September.

September marked a robust month for fundraising, with a clear tilt towards fresh equity issuance in IPOs, especially among SMEs, and a healthy increase in debt issuance. This trend reflects a growing appetite among companies for new capital to support growth, along with strong investor interest in diverse investment opportunities. *—ANI*

NIFTY CLIMBS 158 POINTS

Sensex snaps 5-day losing streak; rises 602 pts on DII push

MUMBAI, 28 OCT

Stock markets snapped the five-day losing streak on Monday with the benchmark Sensex rebounding 602 points on buying in ICICI Bank, firm global trends and continuous buying by domestic institutional investors (DII).

The BSE Sensex jumped 602.75 points or 0.76 per cent to settle at 80,005.04 as . During the day, it surged 1,137.52 points or 1.43 per cent to 80,539.81.

The NSE Nifty soared 158.35 points or 0.65 per cent to 24,339.15.

A sharp correction in global crude prices in international markets boosted sentiments, traders said.

From the 30 Sensex pack, ICICI Bank climbed 3 per cent after the private sector lender posted a 14.5 per cent growth in standalone profit to Rs 11,746 crore for the second quarter ended September 2024.

JSW Steel, Mahindra & Mahindra, Adani Ports, Tata Steel, Sun Pharma, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Motors and State Bank of India were the other big gainers from the pack.

Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Tech Mahindra, HDFC Bank and Maruti were the laggards.

"The market exhibited a rebound after continuous sell-off last week. Positive results from banks and a slump in oil prices in expectation of an ease in retaliations in the Middle East aided investor sentiment.

The BSE smallcap gauge jumped 1.11 per cent and midcap index climbed 0.69 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, commodities surged 1.79 per cent, realty (1.40 per cent), telecommunication (1.37 per cent), healthcare (1.36 per cent) and metal (1.21 per cent).

Services, energy and capital goods (0.01 per cent).

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled higher.

European markets were trading in the positive territory. The US markets ended on a mixed note on Friday. *—PTI*

Centre launches mobile app to address grievances of rice millers

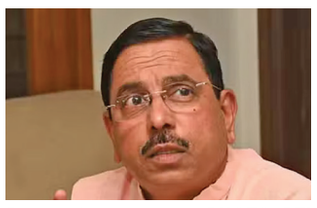
NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Pralhad Joshi, launched the Grievance Redressal Portal of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) for rice millers on Monday.

This new portal aims to enhance transparency and accountability in addressing the concerns of rice millers.

Launching the app, Minister Joshi stated that establishing an effective grievance redressal mechanism is a top priority.

The app allows rice millers to register their grievances directly. Once a complaint is lodged, a three-member team will be dispatched to investigate within three days, engaging with the millers and recommending a resolution within the same period. If rice millers remain unsatisfied, their grievances will be escalated to higher officials for further review.



Pralhad Joshi PHOTO: PTI

"All grievances will be addressed in a transparent manner with a swift, time-bound resolution process, targeted within seven days. The field response team will be on-site within three days to ensure prompt action," Joshi emphasized.

The Minister noted that in every cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inquiries about the grievance redressal mechanisms in place and has instructed the ministry to prioritize grievance redressal for both farmers and millers.

"The Prime Minister also guides us on how to make the grievance redressal process more farmer- and consumer-friendly," Joshi said.

He reaffirmed the government's support for farmers, stating that rice procurement will proceed as committed. *—ANI*

K'taka, UP lead in microfinance industry

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

States like Karnataka Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are emerging as leaders of growth in the microfinance industry.

According to a report by HDFC Securities the microfinance industry in India has been expanding at an impressive pace.

The report emphasised that the microfinance institution (MFI) sector is growing faster than the overall industry growth rate in states like Bihar, Tamil Nadu, UP and Karnataka, highlighting an intensified concentration of microfinance activity in certain regions.

It said "While the overall MFI penetration is healthy, select Top states such as Bihar (approx. 80 per cent +), Tamil Nadu (approx. 53 per cent) and Karnataka (approx. 57 per cent) have high MFI penetration levels. This suggests plausible growth saturation in these markets, with other states likely to contribute higher to overall growth.

Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and

PHOTO: ANI

Karnataka have outpaced the industry's average growth rate, contributing substantially to the industry's expansion.

However, this rapid growth brings with it potential challenges. Nevertheless, states like Bihar (around 80 per cent+), Tamil Nadu (around 53 per cent), and Karnataka (approximately 57 per cent) exhibit especially high penetration rates. These figures suggest that these states might be nearing a saturation point in terms of microfinance reach, which could limit future growth potential. This may encourage further growth contributions from less penetrated states as the industry looks for expansion opportunities. *—ANI*

India hands over solar systems at religious sites in SL

COLOMBO, 28 OCT

India has handed over rooftop solar systems to multiple religious locations in Sri Lanka in continuation of its energy partnership with the island nation, the Indian High Commission here said.

The representatives from the High Commission of India, the Ceylon Electricity Board and the Sri Lanka Sustainable Energy Authority handed over the solar panels and other materials to a Buddhist temple at Hokandara, Sri Aanjaneyar Temple, St. Anthony's Church, and Mutwal Jumma Mosque here, Economy Next reported on Monday.

This initiative is part of a USD 17 million Indian project which aims to install 25 MW solar rooftop systems across 5,000 religious institutions throughout the island nation.

Designed to reduce energy expenses and support Sri Lanka's shift toward renewable energy, the project spans all nine provinces and 25 districts. *—PTI*

GOYAL IN SAUDI

India, Saudi seek energy, digital infra ties

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will discuss ways to increase cooperation with Saudi Arabia in areas like renewable energy, digital infrastructure, and manufacturing during his two-day visit, an official statement said on Monday.

The visit to Riyadh will begin from Tuesday.

The commerce and industry ministry said Goyal will participate in the Future Investment Initiative (FII) in Riyadh, a crucial platform that brings together global leaders, investors, and innovators.

His participation will highlight India's rapid economic growth, its focus on sustainable development, AI, and the immense opportunities in sectors like renewable energy, digital infrastructure, and advanced manufacturing, it said.

On the sidelines of the FII, the minister will engage with prominent global investors.

"These interactions aim to strengthen investor confidence, facilitate investment flows, and promote India as a preferred global investment destination," it said.

Piyush Goyal PHOTO: PTI

He will also hold bilateral meetings with key Saudi ministers, including the Minister of Commerce, Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources, Minister of Investment, and Minister of Energy, to discuss collaborative efforts in energy transition, digital transformation, and trade facilitation.

Further, he will co-chair the second ministerial meeting of the Economy and Investment Committee under the India-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council, focusing on sectors like agriculture, food security, energy, technology, and infrastructure. *—PTI*

Delhi-NCR sees highest price rise of 57% in July-Sept

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

Average housing prices across top eight cities rose in a range of 7 per cent to 57 per cent during the July-September period, with Delhi-NCR witnessing maximum appreciation and Hyderabad the lowest, according to PropTiger.

Real estate consultant PropTiger data showed that the average housing prices in Delhi-NCR grew 57 per cent to Rs 8,017 per square feet during July-September from Rs 5,105 per square feet in the year-ago period. PropTiger attributed this price appreciation to rising demand, especially for high-end properties.

Bengaluru saw a 15 per cent increase in prices to Rs 7,512 from Rs 6,550 per square feet.

As per the data, the prices in Ahmedabad increased 21 per cent to Rs 4,736 per square feet in July-September from Rs 3,900 per square feet in the year-ago period. Housing prices in Chennai grew 22 per cent to Rs 7,179 from Rs 5,885 per square feet, while in Kolkata the rates rose 22 per cent to Rs 5,844 against Rs 4,797 per square feet. *—PTI*

Realty firms raise ₹13K cr via QIP during Jan-Sept

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

Real estate developers have raised nearly Rs 13,000 crore till September this calendar year through issue of equity shares via Qualified Institutional Placements (QIP) route, according to Anarock.

Real estate consultant Anarock on Monday said that Indian real estate developers have been aggressively tapping capital markets through Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) and Qualified Institutional Placements (QIPs) after the Covid pandemic.

Enhanced transparency, a robust post-pandemic residential real estate recovery,

PHOTO: PTI

and strong investor confidence are factors driving a surge in activity, it added.

QIPs allow publicly-traded companies to raise capital by offering equities or securities convertible into equity to pre-approved institutional buyers. This fundraising approach lets companies skip the more conventional Initial Public Offering (IPO) route and quickly raise substantial funds. Anarock Chairman Anuj Puri said, "By the third quarter of 2024, the real estate sector contributed over 17 per cent of QIP issuance across sectors, or Rs 12,801 crore of a total of Rs 75,923 crore." As per the data, Prestige Estates Projects Ltd, Macrotech Developers and Brigade Enterepises were major players that raised money through QIP route at Rs 5,000 crore, Rs 3,281 crore and Rs 1,500 crore, respectively. D B Realty raised Rs 920 crore, while Keystone Realtors Limited and Max Estates raised Rs 800 crore each, Anant Raj Ltd raised Rs 500 crore through QIP. *—PTI*

'STALL THE MOVE'

AI's new room-sharing policy for crew 'illegal', govt intervention sought

MUMBAI, 28 OCT

The All-India Cabin Crew Association has termed Tata Group-owned Air India's room-sharing policy for a section of cabin crew members as "illegal, bad in law, and Void ab initio on multiple fronts." The association has requested intervention from the Labour Ministry, urging it to stall the move.

The association is seeking these entitlements — hotel accommodation and conditions of accommodation — in line with the policy on accommodation for pilots, as per the previous agreements and tribunal awards.

The association has also written to Air India Chief Campbell Wilson, urging him "not to violate" the existing status quo, and respect the sanctity of the Industrial Tribunal and the pending Industrial dispute over the issue.

Under the new policy effective 1 December, members will be required to share rooms during layovers except for cabin executives PHOTO:X

Under the new policy effective 1 December, members will be required to share rooms during layovers except for cabin executives and those operating ultra-long-haul flights ahead of the merger of Vistara with it, scheduled for 11 November. Cabin crew members on ultra-long-haul flights will get single rooms during layovers as well as during unscheduled layovers in the event of a flight diversion, as per the internal communication. Generally, ultra-long-haul flights are those having a duration of 16 hours or more. Air India operates such flights to North America.

Cabin executives, who are senior members with around 8 years of flying experience, will also get single rooms during layovers, as per the internal communication. *—PTI*

Premium vehicles demand surges amid festive season

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

Grant Thornton Bharat's latest survey, Shifting Gears: Understanding Passenger Vehicle Market Trends, reveals significant shifts in consumer preferences during the festive season, indicating a transformation in India's automotive landscape.

With 85 per cent of respondents expressing an interest in premium vehicles and a notable rise in the preference for hybrid vehicles over electric vehicles (EVs), the survey marks a turning point for the industry. Consumers are now exploring both luxury and sustainable options, signalling a new era for the Indian automotive sector. It highlights that 40 per cent of respondents favour hybrid vehicles, a significant increase from previous years, compared to just 17 per cent opting for EVs.

Meanwhile, 34 per cent continue to prefer petrol-powered vehicles, underscoring the market's transitional nature.

The growing inclination toward hybrids suggests that while consumers are exploring sustainable alternatives, many remain cautious about fully committing to EVs, largely due to the need for more robust charging infrastructure and incentives.

Saket Mehra, Partner and Auto & EV Industry Leader at Grant Thornton Bharat said,, "Despite these challenges, early October sales--showing a 30-35 per cent increase in registrations compared to September--offer encouraging signs. As market dynamics evolve, automakers must align with shifting preferences, such as growing demand for premium vehicles and increasing engagement through digital channels." *—ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gary Kirsten resigns as Pakistan's coach

KARACHI, 28 OCT

Pakistan's white-ball coach Gary Kirsten has stepped down after reportedly developing a rift with the country's cricket board within six months of his appointment. The 56-year-old South African, who coached India to victory at the 2011 ODI World, was appointed by the PCB (Pakistan Cricket Board) in April end this year. "The Pakistan Cricket Board today announced Jason Gillespie will coach the Pakistan men's cricket team on next month's white-ball tour of Australia after Gary Kirsten submitted his resignation, which was accepted," the PCB posted on Twitter. According to ESPNCricinfo, his decision to quit is down to a rift with red ball coach Jason Gillespie, and the PCB after the board decided to withdraw their selection powers. Selection is now exclusively the domain of the selection committee. Kirsten is also expected to issue a statement later in the day.—*PTI*

Chaufla secures silver at All India Racketlon Open

MUMBAI, 28 OCT

India's Vikramaditya Chaufla had to settle for a silver medal after going down fighting against UAE's Mohammed Kuba in the All India Racketlon Open here.Chaufla, who is India's highest-ranked racketlon player and has taken part in multiple world championships, ended on the podium alongside gold winner Kuba and third-place Adit Patel in the premier men's singles event of the tournament. The finals took place on Sunday. Racketlon is a combination sport in which the competitors are required to play four racket sports: table tennis, badminton, tennis, and squash. Naheed Divecha won the women's singles title ahead of Shikha Barasia and Tara Bhandare. In the men's singles 40-plus category, Nikhil Bhandare won the gold ahead of Varun Motasha and Akshay Jalan.—*PTI*

PHOTO: TWITTER

Rayhan Thomas finishes seventh in Thailand

BANGKOK, 28 OCT

India's Rayhan Thomas registered a second top-10 finish on the Asian Tour, ending up tied-seventh at the International Series Thailand after being three off the lead after 54 holes. The UAE-based golfer was unable to replicate the magic of the second and third rounds of 63-64 as he shot 2-under 68 on the final day to total 16-under. He had four birdies, three of them between the 14th and the 17th. Among the other Indians, Gaganjeet Bhullar (67) finished tied for 19th, and Karandeep Kochhar (67) tied for 24.—*PTI*

IWL-2 to kick off on 10 Jan with a doubleheader

NEW DELHI, 28 OCT

Defending champions Odisha FC will take on East Bengal, while Gokulam Kerala FC will face debutants Sreebhumi FC to kick off the Indian Women's League (IWL) with a double-header on 10 January, 2025. The league will be played in a home-and-away format and will run till April 13 as per the fixtures unveiled by the All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Monday. The second-tier league champions of last season, Sreebhumi FC of Kolkata, and runners-up NITA Football Academy of Odisha in its second edition.—*PTI*

3rd ODI: India women need to resolve batting brittleness

Mandhana's form continues to be a concern

AHMEDABAD, 28 OCT

India will be hoping to resolve their batting brittleness in their quest to win the third and final women's ODI and seal the series against New Zealand here on Tuesday.

It was clear from the first match, which the hosts won by 59 runs through a fine effort by the bowlers, that India's batting was not in top shape, and the second one-dayer underscored that reality.

India's batting went a notch down on Friday as they were bundled out for 183 while chasing 260.

It was a tough target indeed, but not improbable in nature as Indian batters succumbed to spot-on White Ferns bowlers and to their own indiscretions.

It required a record ninth-wicket stand of 70 runs between Radha Yadav and Saima Thakor to add a touch of respectability to India's run chase.

Even the overall picture is not a rosy one, as Indian batters are yet to score an individual fifty across two matches.

Radha's 48 in the second ODI is the highest individual score from India's side during this series, and the home team will require a drastic turnaround in the final match.

India women's cricket team PHOTO: PTI

For that, India's power troika upfront -- openers Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur -- will have to fire in unison.

It can have a ripple effect in a strong-on-paper middle-order consisting of Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, and Tejal Hasabnis.

Mandhana's form continued to be a bit of concern as she hardly looked like a pale shadow of her customary gracefully dominant batter.

She is yet to reach a two-figure score against New Zealand, and a series decider could be a perfect occasion for her to rewrite the script.

On the other hand, Indian bowlers continued their good effort despite conceding 259 in the previous match.

At one stage, the visitors were 87 for no loss in 14 overs and 139 for 3 in 30 overs, but the Indian bowlers did well to rein them back and limit them to a total of less than 280-290 that at one stage looked achievable.

The left-arm spinner Radha has once again been impressive with a four-wicket haul to go with the three wickets she plucked in the first game.

She will need to be at her best once more to keep the free-flowing New Zealand batters in check.

New Zealand have also been bolstered by the presence of veteran pacer Lea Tahuhu who replaced injured Moly Penfold in the eleven and immediately impressed with a three-wicket haul.

The match starts at 1:30 pm IST. —*PTI*

U23 WORLD WRESTLING C'SHIPS

India's Chirag Chikkara PHOTO: @ X TWITTER

Chirag becomes 2nd Indian male to win Gold

TIRANA, 28 OCT

India's Chirag Chikkara clinched Gold in the men's 57kg category at the U23 World Championships, defeating Kyrgyzstan's Abdymalik Karachov 4-3 in Albania's Tirana on Sunday.

The 18-year-old became only the second male wrestler to be crowned U-23 World Champion after Aman Sehrawa, who had achieved the feat in 2022. Reetika Hooda is the other, as the first Indian woman to win the gold at the U23 World Wrestling Championships in 2023.

Sehrawat had achieved the feat in the same category in the 2022 edition of the meet while Reetika Hooda had become the first Indian woman to bag a gold at the tournament when she won in the 76kg category last year.

Ravi Kumar Dahiya also won a silver in the U23 World Championships in 2018.

Chikkara reached the final after a series of dominant performances, defeating Gaukoto Ozawa 6-1 in the pre-quarterfinals, Iunus Iavbatirov 12-2 in the last eight stage and Allan Oralbek 8-0 in the semifinals.

India's medal haul in the men's freestyle category also included two bronze medals, trailing Iran (158), Japan (102), and Azerbaijan (100).

Iran topped the team rankings with 158 points followed by Japan (102), Azerbaijan (100), and India (82). —*PTI*

Rinku and Rana shine as UP gains control over Punjab

MULLANPUR, 28 OCT

Rinku Singh and Nitish Rana powered Uttar Pradesh to a commanding position against Punjab with entertaining fifties on day three of their Ranji Trophy Group C match here on Monday.

After opener Madhav Kaushik's career-best 163, the visitors came up with four more half-centuries to declare their first innings for a massive 556/9, taking a lead of 346 runs.

At stumps, Punjab were struggling at 49/1, trailing by 297 runs.

The Kolkata Knight Riders duo of Rana and Rinku laid the foundation with a crucial 120-run partnership for the third wicket.

Rana struck an aggressive 66 off 106 balls, hitting 11 fours, while Rinku made 68 off 131 balls, with eight fours and a six.

Saurabh Kumar joined the onslaught with a brisk 67-ball 69, smashing three sixes and five fours, while Shivam Sharma contributed an unbeaten 50 off 58 balls, including four sixes and two fours, to further frustrate the Punjab attack.

Harshal, Yuzi lift Haryana past MP

In Indore, Harshal Patel's unbeaten 72 at No. 9 and Yuzvendra Chahal's gritty 27 off 142 balls helped Haryana secure a vital first-innings lead over Madhya Pradesh.

Opener Lakshay Dalal hit his maiden century (105 off 271 balls), while Dheeru Singh fell just short of three figures with a well-crafted 94.

Ton-up Mayank leads Karnataka to big lead

In Patna, veteran Mayank Agarwal came up with his 18th first-class century, 105, while Manish Pandey made a brisk 56 (55b) to help Karnataka overcome a difficult start to take first innings lead over Bihar.

In reply to Bihar's 143, Karnataka ended the day on 287/7. —*PTI*

HYLO OPEN 2024

Hopes on Malvika Bansod

SAARBRUCKEN, 28 OCT

The focus will be on Malvika Bansod, the country's second-highest ranked player in women's singles when a young Indian contingent takes the courts in the BWF Super 300 event to be held in Germany from Tuesday.

A total of 11 Indian badminton players will be in action in the event with Malvika, ranked 35 in the BWF World Ranking, being the highest ranked among them.

In the absence of top Indian badminton players like two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu, Paris Olympic Games semifinalist Lakshya Sen, Thomas Cup star HS Prannoy, and 2021 World Championships silver medallist Kidambi Srikanth, the Indian youngsters will hope to make the most of their chances at the badminton courts of the Saarlandhalle indoor arena.

Malvika Bansod PHOTO: PTI

In the women's singles, the focus will be on Bansod, who had reached the quarterfinals here last year, starting against Bulgaria's Hristomira Popovska. If she wins her first-round match, the 23-year-old Malvika Bansod, seeded sixth in the event, will take on the winner of the match between Disha Gupta of the United States and Yvonne Li of Germany. Rakshitha Sree Santhosh, the other India in the women's singles draw, will start against Yu Chien Hui of Chinese Taipei in the bottom half of the draw. —*PTI*

CARLOS SAINZ WINS MEXICO GP

SINGAPORE, 6 JUNE

Carlos Sainz cruised to an emotional victory for Ferrari ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris in Sunday's incident-filled Mexico City Grand Prix as Red Bull's series leader Max Verstappen was handed two 10-second penalties on his way to sixth.

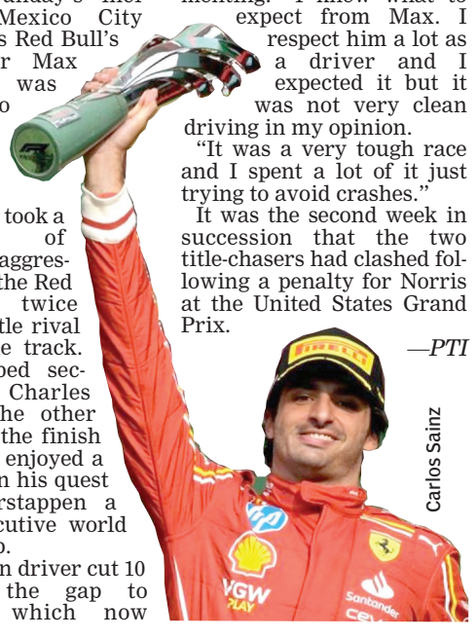
The stewards took a dim view of Verstappen's aggressive driving, the Red Bull driver twice forcing his title rival Norris off the track. Norris grabbed second from Charles Leclerc in the other Ferrari near the finish as the Briton enjoyed a major boost in his quest to deny Verstappen a fourth consecutive world championship.

The McLaren driver cut 10 points off the gap to Verstappen which now stands at 47 with four race weekends remaining.

Verstappen paid a heavy price for his show of ruthlessness with Norris commenting: "I knew what to expect from Max. I respect him a lot as a driver and I expected it but it was not very clean driving in my opinion.

"It was a very tough race and I spent a lot of it just trying to avoid crashes."

It was the second week in succession that the two title-chasers had clashed following a penalty for Norris at the United States Grand Prix. —*PTI*



Carlos Sainz

Shubhankar Sharma PHOTO: X

Is Antonio Conte's Napoli for real?

ROME, 28 OCT

Antonio Conte's Napoli has been unbeatable since mid-August. Now comes the real test.

The Serie A leader will travel to the San Siro twice for games at AC Milan and Inter Milan in a space of less than two weeks and also play Atalanta and Roma over its next four matches. The rough stretch starts on Tuesday in Milan. Suppose Napoli can keep the lead or stay near the top after these four games. In that case, the Partenopei will be a serious contender for their second Italian title in three years an achievement that would improve upon the two "scudetti" in four years that the club won with Maradona in 1987 and 1990. —*PTI*

Spanish League: Madrid's struggles continue with a loss

Atletico Madrid players leave the pitch after their loss to Real Betis PHOTO: EPA

MADRID, 28 OCT

Atletico Madrid can't find a way to end its slump.

Diego Simeone's team followed up its home loss against Lille in the Champions League with a 1-0 defeat at Real Betis in the Spanish league on Sunday.

An own goal by defender José María Giménez less than five minutes into the match sealed Atletico's second consecutive loss.

It has only one win in its last six matches in all competitions a 3-1 victory over Leganes in the Spanish league last weekend. Before that, it had league draws at home against Real Madrid and at Real Sociedad, and it lost 4-1 at Benfica in the Champions League.

"We know what we have to do, what we need to work on," Simeone said. "It's clear to me that soccer is all about getting the work done and when you can't find that dynamic you end up suffering." —*PTI*

Man United fires manager Erik Ten Hag

A Manchester United fired Erik ten Hag on Monday after a troubled start to the season left the 20-time English champions in 14th place in the Premier League and the club's new leadership unimpressed with the pace of change under the Dutchman. Ten Hag, who was hired in 2022, paid the price for leading United to just three wins in nine league games in the opening months of the campaign. There have been four defeats, the 2-1 loss at West Ham on Sunday being his last game in charge.

BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY

Inglis 'in mix' for Test debut: Bailey

SYDNEY, 28 OCT

In red-hot form, Australian white-ball wicketkeeper-batter Josh Inglis is "in the mix" to make his Test debut as a specialist batter in the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy next month, hinted chief selector George Bailey on Monday.

India, unbeaten in the marquee series on the previous four occasions, will face Australia in a five-Test series beginning in Perth on 21 November."There's no doubt that the form is fantastic at the moment... the ability to jump back into domestic cricket and dominate has been fantastic," Bailey told reporters."

I think in different series at different times of the year, he would firmly come into the mix purely as a batter the way he's been going."

"If the right opportunity opened up throughout the summer, in the spots where we think he's most capable of performing, I think he'd be firmly in that conversation as well."The 29-year-old, who is Australia's incumbent keeper in ODI and T20Is, has scored four centuries in the last seven Sheffield Shield matches.

But with Australian Test wicketkeeper Alex Carey in rich form, Inglis has emerged as a specialist middle-order batter, but not for the vacant opening slot, Bailey said. Australia's move to promote Steve Smith at the top following David Warner's retirement did not work out and with Cameron Green ruled out of the India series because of a back injury, there's a vacancy alongside Usman Khawaja. —*PTI*

George Bailey

Australia's captain is yet to be named

Australia have rested their Test regulars for their home T20I series against Pakistan with a captain yet to be named, choosing to focus on the marquee Border-Gavaskar series against India next month. Australia host Pakistan for three ODIs starting 4 November, followed by the three-match T20I series, from 14 Nov.

Genesis title: Sharma finishes 66th as Byeong beats Kim

INCHEON, 28 OCT

It was another disappointing week for Shubhankar Sharma, whose weekend rounds of 76-76 saw him finish tied-66th at the Genesis Championship on the DP World Tour.

Earlier, Sharma had rounds of 71 and 68.Korea's Byeong Hun An beat fellow countryman Tom Kim in the play-off to secure his second DP World Tour title. Birdies kept pouring throughout the day as six players held the lead in some capacity at the Jack Nicklaus Golf Club on Sunday.

The group at the top of the leaderboard was closely packed until Kim jumped one shot clear heading down the last when An lipped out for a bogey on the penultimate hole. Both landed their approach shots to eight feet for birdie putts, with An applying the pressure by draining his effort to move back alongside Kim at 17 under.

Kim needed to sink his to claim the one-shot victory, but he lipped out and the two home favorites were forced into a playoff.Both played risky second shots when replaying the par-five last, but Kim was left in a precarious position. —*PTI*

Shubhankar Sharma